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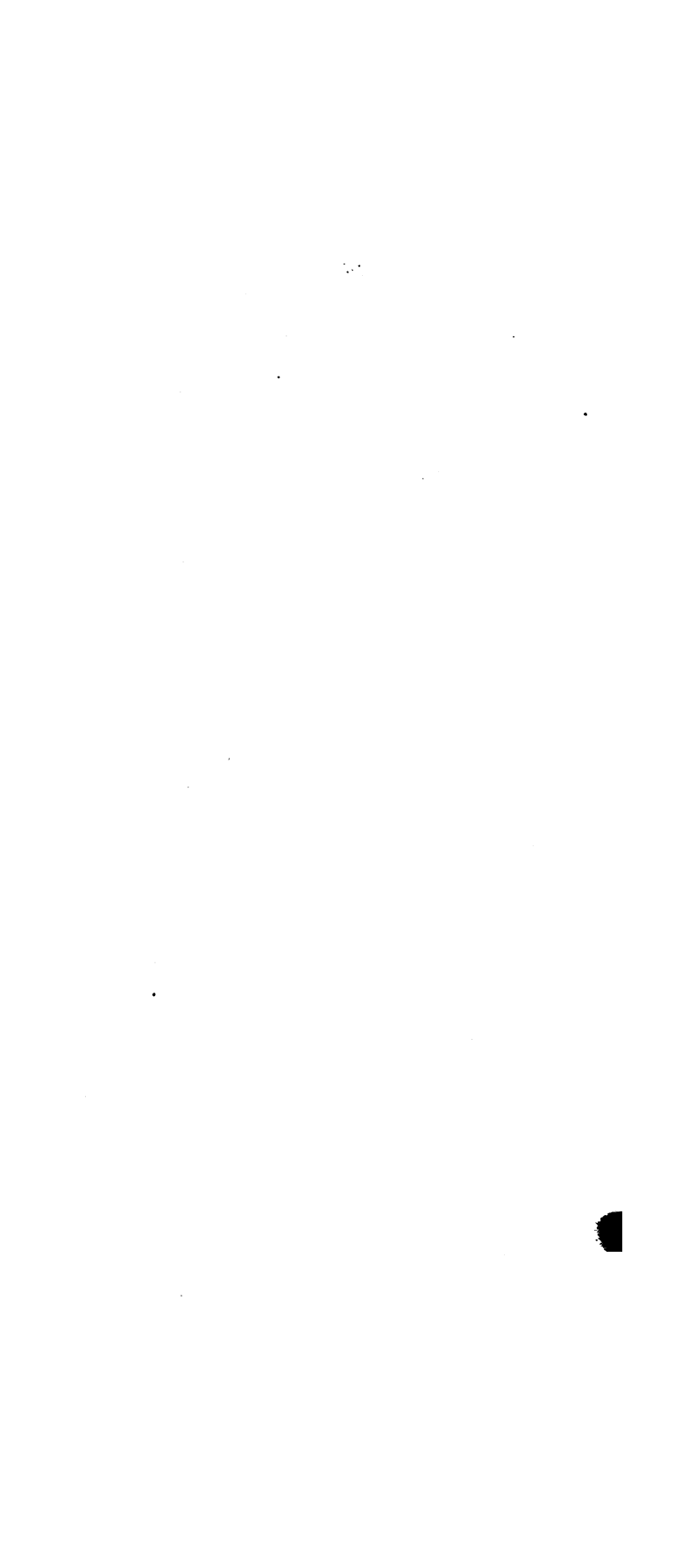
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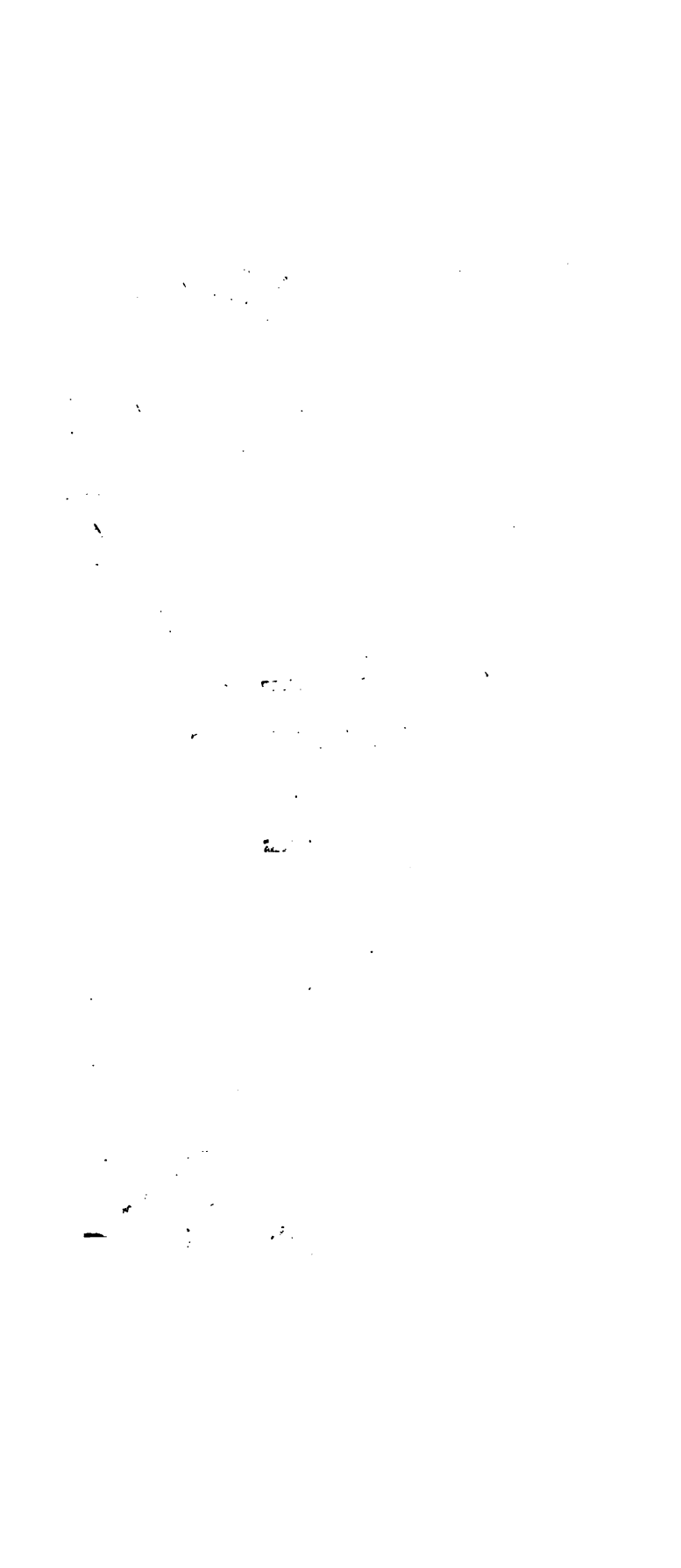






FAMILIAR SCENES,

&c. &c.



FAMILIAR
SCENES,
HISTORIES,
AND
REFLECTIONS.

"BY THE AUTHOR OF COTTAGE SKETCHES."

"ANTIDOTE TO THE MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE," &c.

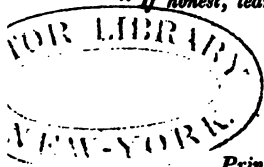
Harriet Corp

"The world's a system of theology,

"Read by the greatest strangers to the schools,

"If honest, learn'd; and sages o'er a plough."

YOUNG.



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PREFACE.



THE friends of benevolence, in the present age, enjoy a triumph peculiarly interesting and gratifying, a triumph over every sordid and illiberal sentiment, which would check the advancement of intellectual improvement, or confine it to certain ranks in society. The poor of the land are now admitted to that equality which God ordains, and the order of society can maintain ; an equality in the enjoyment of every means for growing "Wise unto salvation."

Perhaps next to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, that of moral and religious tracts may be calculated to bring about this important end : actuated by this hope, the writer of the present work, united with others, in supplying a few pages in the "Cottage Magazine," where the greater part of it has already been published, without any intention of extending its circulation beyond those limits. Several friends, however, whom the author esteems as judicious advisers, deeming it calculated for usefulness, she is induced to give it a wider range. Though the work is best adapted to the reading of that class for whom it was first designed (the writer hopes not altogether *exclusively*)---the young, in a *higher* circle, may probably find some hints for

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instruction ; and the benevolent donors of it to their poor neighbours, she flatters herself, will not find the duty of a previous perusal a tiresome task.

To those who entertain objections to fiction in the work of serious instruction, it may be satisfactory to be informed, that the incidents and characters introduced in these pages, are taken from real life, and, excepting in the mode of relation, imagination has had little share in the composition.

While the writers and distributors of religious tracts congratulate their poor neighbours on the advantages they enjoy over their forefathers, in the means of instruction, they wish also to point out to their consideration, the responsibility attached, and earnestly pray that they may be found amongst those faithful servants, who duly improving the gifts already bestowed by their heavenly Master, shall possess a greater abundance.

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FAMILIAR SCENES,

&c.



CHAP. I.

An Observer's Remarks.

THE character I have assumed, should be assumed by all who wish to pass through life in a manner beneficial to themselves or others. How can they praise God for their creation, if they make no observation on the end for which they were created; namely, to glorify his holy name by a life of obedience to his commands? How can they be grateful for all the blessings of this life, if they are unobservant of the wonderful works of Providence, guarding them from dangers, and pointing out the paths in which they should walk? And how can they praise him above all for his inestimable love in redemption, if they do not observe the depravity of nature existing within them, making them averse to good, and prone to evil? As respects

their usefulness to all around them, it is necessary they should be observers, for how can the young be advised, the ignorant instructed, and the afflicted comforted, if no friendly observer steps forward for these several important purposes ?

These reasons duly approved will ensure respect to my character ; and for my opinions, I entreat my readers to bring them to the test of Scripture, assured that those only can judge of what is truth, who make them their chief study. For my situation in life, I wish them to imaginé me residing amongst rural scenes, observing mostly on my surrounding neighbours in the lowest rank of life, and to that description of readers I dedicate the result of my observations.

The first general observation I made on my neighbours was, that the dispensations of Providence, though various, were not so unequal as I once imagined ; for I saw the blessings of health imparted where wealth was withheld. I saw peculiar strength given to limbs ; which were appointed to works of peculiar labour. I beheld the astonishing effect which constant employment produced on the tempers of the industrious, making them in general cheerful, and adding a relish* to their occasional relaxations, wholly unknown to the idle and dissipated part of society. And I discovered that the gifts of a clear understanding, a sound judgment

and a retentive memory, were not withheld from the poor and illiterate. True, indeed, I had frequent occasion to lament the abuse of health, strength, and understanding; but Providence was not answerable for those abuses.

The second general observation I made was, the effect good morals produced on the *temporal* interest of my poor neighbours. It gained them the respect and assistance of the rich; insomuch, that after many years of observation, I did not meet with a single instance of virtuous poverty wholly destitute of friends. And lastly, I observed that none of my poor neighbours maintained a regular course of sobriety and honesty, who did not profess to think *religion* of importance.

So far my general observations. I shall now proceed to prove the truth of them, from examples and occurrences. Soon after my arrival at my village retreat, I paid a visit to the parish workhouse, where I had the satisfaction of hearing several of my rich neighbours had been before, and by their kind attentions to the management of this too often neglected charitable institution, had rendered the situation of its inhabitants more comfortable than they are commonly found. Notwithstanding this I observed an air of dissatisfaction was spread over most of the faces I saw, and I resolved to enter into conversation with a few of

them, in order to discover the cause, and, if possible, apply a remedy.

I accosted first an old man, who was hobbling along upon crutches. "Friend," said I, "you are happily provided with a home now you are old and helpless." "A home, Sir," replied he, "'tis a bad sort of a home, I should never have caught the *rheumatis*, and lost the use of my limbs, if I had'nt comed here." "You forget your age," said another old man standing near, "he's ten years older than I am, and I'm the age of man. What a discontented old soul *you be*, I've more cause to grumble, for you comed in of your own choosing, and I was forced in by the parish officers." "Don't reflect so harshly on him," said I, "if he forgets his age, or mistakes the cause of his infirmities, that's not the way to convince him." "My poor old friend," resumed I, "be content with your lot. 'Tis seldom appointed to man to reach the years full of labour and sorrow, and whether they overtake us in a palace or a work-house they need the exercise of patience and resignation." A gleam of satisfaction lighted up his withered countenance, which I hoped was occasioned by the idea I had suggested, but was sadly disappointed to discover it arose merely from the triumph he seemed to feel at my reproof of his acquaintance. "You had need come forwards to talk to gentlefolks," said he, "who begged their bread and stole gin?" The pointed

question, and the silence of the questioned, plainly told me the truth of the case. It told me also another truth, that this old man, just arrived at the brink of the grave, was a stranger to religion; for true religion is always practical, and in this case would not have returned railing for railing, nor revenged the injury by the disgrace of another. "My poor old friend," again repeated I, "your case is yet more deplorable than I feared, when I first accoeted you, for I find by your talk, you harbour an unchristian spirit. And what do you think will become of you, if you are called hence before you are made a Christian?" My question imposed a like silence as his had done before, and the old man advanced his crutches in the act of retiring. I followed, saying, "Yet do not suppose it is too late for you to become a Christian. Blessed be God there is an eleventh hour, and the Saviour waits to be gracious to all the weary and heavy laden, who are willing to come to him." "I have heard a great deal of that sort of talk," replied the old man, "and I'm not afraid to die. I'm as good as most in this house for certain." Alas! thought I, you are no subject for the sons of consolation. "You have heard religious talk to no purpose," said I, "if you are not sensible of the awful state of sin in which you are involved, and afraid of the consequences." "Parson Goodall preaches here every Sunday morning at seven o'clock," he replied, and with a look, which I thought

said, there is therefore no need of your interference. "I am glad to hear that," returned I, "for he is a preacher of the truth, and I sincerely hope he will be made the savour of *life*, not *death*, to you, for one or the other must every preacher of the truth be made to his hearers." As he still drew nearer and nearer the door, evidently desirous of quitting me, I turned from him, deeply lamenting his miserable situation. His bodily decrepitude, his poverty and the meanness of his dwelling, were circumstances of small moment compared with his hardness of heart, and contempt of admonition.

A middle-aged man, with a wooden leg, now passed me, and I accosted him with the question, how he came in that condition? He told me he had lost his leg in the service of his king and country, but he should not have valued that, if they had found him a better place than a work-house to die in. I felt a little surprised that they had not, and being a governor of one of our noble asylums, for the relief of my brave but poor countrymen, was turning in my mind the means of amending his situation, when on looking more earnestly in his face, I discovered he was an old pensioner, who had been expelled from the hospital to which I belonged, for immoral conduct and breach of rules. "Ungrateful murmurer," said I, "what thanks do you owe your God, and country for providing any

habitation for you?" His confusion may easily be imagined when I mentioned my knowledge of his person and character, and he slunk away from further observation, as the old man had done before.

CHAP. II.

Visit to the Work-house.

I OBSERVED an elderly woman knitting, and drew near to speak to her, in the hope that employment had produced in her a better humour than was enjoyed by the idle inhabitants I had before conversed with. "I am glad to see you willing to work," said I. "'Tis but little, Sir," she replied, "that I can do," and then enumerated a long list of ailments with which she was afflicted, and which had reduced her to the necessity of living on the parish. She then added, "There's an old saying, that 'learning is better than house or land,' but I'm sure my husband didn't find it so, or I should not have been here." I felt some curiosity to know how it happened that the old saying, to the truth of which I had myself assented, had failed in her case, and as she seemed of a talkative disposition, sat down on a broken chair by her, in expectation of a satisfactory account. "I thought 'twas a great thing," resumed she, "to marry a scholar, for, Sir, my husband was sent to a very topping

school, and stayed there till he was fourteen or fifteen, and then he was bound *prentice* to a wig maker, right over the way against Humphrey Preach's, the top barber now in the town ;—well, as I said, I thought 'twas a great thing to marry a scholar, and he didn't mind my not being one too, because (though you would'nt think it now may be) I had a pretty face. All the gentry about employed him to make wigs and dress hair, and a fine *roaring* trade he might have had if he would have left off reading, and spouting out of book ; but what did he do, the very year we were married, but set up a club for a parcel of boys and he to spout at, and to be sure gabbling so much made 'em dry, and then the money went for drink ; and while he was gabbling and drinking, I was crying for money to feed and clothe myself and a child I had the first year. At last I got him to give up his club, but the matter was'nt mended a bit, for he then took to singing, and many a good dinner he had by way of pay, but I was never the better for it ; so we went on for about five years, when Humphrey Preach set up against us, as I said, right over the way, and got all the business, and he was'nt to be blamed for that, if one won't work another must." " But," replied I, " you should not lay the blame on learning neither. It appears to me that your husband neglected the best learning ; for this spouting, I suppose, was of a trifling sort, out of plays perhaps. If he had read good books,

they might have taught him the duties of his station." "Why there's something in that to be sure, Sir," replied the poor woman, "so as I was saying, Humphrey Preach ran away with all the business; but my husband one night came home in high glee from one of his feasts, and told me he had hired himself to a set of strolling players, and should get more money in one night amongst them, than he could in a month by wig-making. That if I would stay behind with the boy, he would soon send me plenty of money; but if I had a mind to learn to act plays, he would take me with him; but he was afraid I could not read well enough. Now I was always pretty spiritty, as we say, when I was put up, and seeing he was so willing to part, I told him I wasn't such a fool as to believe what players said, and was sick of the sight of play-books, that he was welcome to go if he liked, I could maintain myself and the boy. So off he set in a few days, and all I said at parting was, Mark the winding of it up." "You did not act quite right here," interrupted I, "you should have quietly reasoned with him, and begged your minister, or some religious person, to have talked with him." "Ah! Sir," resumed she, "he only laughed at parsons and godly folks." "No matter for that," replied I, "you should have done your duty, we must all use every means in our power to reform a sinner, and look for a blessing from God, which is often granted when we least expect it; but let

me hear the end of your story." "'Twas a bad ending, Sir," replied she, "for no good could come after he took to running about the country acting plays. He ran himself into a consumption, and the doctors said it was brought on by bawling so loud, and being out in night air. He was little better than a corpse, when at the end of two years, he was brought home to me, and not one of his learned acquaintance would give sixpence to help him. I had made a pretty many more friends by washing and scrubbing houses for the gentlefolks round here." "Doubtless you had," observed I, "for honest industry will be preferred to idle folly, by the well-discerning."

Though this woman in her story shewed a roughness of manner not altogether becoming, as reflecting so much on her husband's character, she yet proved herself no stranger to affectionate feelings by her concluding observation. "I can't bear," said she, wiping her eyes with the stocking she had almost finished, "to talk of the poor soul's last sickness." "By no means," replied I, "'tis no use to distress yourself to satisfy my curiosity." "Humphrey Preach could tell you all about it, Sir," returned she. The poor woman was now seized with a violent fit of coughing, which was one of the disorders she had mentioned at the beginning of our conversation. I expressed my fears to a woman at a little distance that I had been the

occasion in part, by leading her to talk too much. She came forward, as I hoped, with a kind intention to assist her neighbour, who seemed to me nearly strangled; but I was disappointed, for she assured me nothing could be done, and that she would come out of her fit in about a quarter of an hour, adding, " 'Tis all her own fault, I thought how it would be when I saw her gabbling at such a rate, it always sets her off; and 'tis not for such as her to ask money of gentlefolks—she's allowed some every week by Madam Goodall. Nobody thinks of me, though I have worked hard all my life, and lived in great houses." Much disgusted with these few words, which betrayed immediately the character of their speaker, I left her without reply, and went in quest of the master or mistress of the house, in order to ascertain whether that part of her intelligence which respected the impossibility of relieving the violence of the cough was true. The latter dispatched a little girl with a cup of water, which she sometimes found efficacious, and which she informed me was known to be so by the woman above mentioned; but her envious unfeeling disposition was well-known throughout the house; and as for her complaint of being forgotten by the gentlefolks, they had only one token to remember her by, and that was the manner in which she wasted their property, while she lived in their services. " Indeed, Sir," added the mistress, " I can truly assure you, that out of the forty poor

objects you may see under this roof, there are only ten who have not been driven here by their vices or imprudences. I acknowledge their fare is hard; 'tis not to be expected they should fare so well as the honest and industrious poor, who lay by for old age, and bring up their children in a way to help them besides : but they make themselves miserable chiefly by their discontented, unreasonable tempers." " The way of transgressors is indeed hard, as the wise man observes, in every sense," replied I, " but those ten you mention, what do they say of your accommodations ?" " They have reason to be more satisfied," returned she, " because they have each of them an allowance from friends, who knew them in their days of industry : and this enables them to purchase little comforts it cannot be expected the house should afford them."

I felt delighted at this new proof of the truth of one of my general observations. The little girl who had been sent with the water, now returned. I observed that she was sadly deformed in her person, though of a pleasing and intelligent countenance. I asked the mistress if she was a specimen of a work-house nursing. " Alas !" she replied, " too true an one, in most cases where the houses are not overlooked by the gentry as ours is ; but I'm proud to say, there is no such object here besides herself, and her own mother was the only one to blame in her case. The heightened colour which appeared

in the child's face as she heard our remarks, while it shewed her sensibility, reproved my want of it ; and regretting my having exposed it to the trial, I tenderly assured her, that the wise and good would never value her the less for her shape being somewhat different from their own : and that especially God would not disregard her, since he looked only on the beauty of the soul, and had most probably permitted this deformity of body for the advantage of that nobler part.

CHAP. III.

The Causes of Discontent.

“**M**ADAM GOODALL says so too, Sir,” replied the little girl, “and I don’t fret half so much as I did before she taught me to read and say my catechism.” She then turned towards the mistress, and asked her leave to go to Gaffer. “Aye, aye,” returned she, with a good humoured air, “go along; I know you have been wishing to go to him for this hour past. She is,” continued she, after she was gone, “a sweet tempered child, and very useful in the house; but the doctors say she will never live to grow up, on account of her make, and she is very ailing sometimes already. Gaffer, as she calls him, is an old blind fisher-man, who nets fishing or garden nets, and sings psalms from morning to night, except ’tis when Mary visits him, which is two or three times a day. She learnt to read to please Gaffer more than herself; and it does one good to hear her read to him out of the Bible, or some book that Madam Goodall

gives her, and then talk it all over. For certain he's the happiest body in this house, though he's the only blind one in it."

I was not surprised at this remark, as from this short account of Gaffer, it was plain the eyes of his understanding were enlightened; and Mary was not a little raised in my opinion, by her choice of such a companion. I questioned her mistress further about her, but she referred me to a shoemaker's wife, who lived in the next street, and who knew her mother's history better than she did, adding that as I seemed a curious gentleman, it might be worth my while to enquire.

Having nothing worthy of recital to communicate, I will not detain my readers longer in the work-house. I conversed a little with those few, who had, as the mistress said, better reason to be satisfied with its accommodations, on account of the bounty of their friends; but had the mortification to hear, even from them, chiefly the language of complaint; and to observe, that my exhortations to contentment seemed but little to impress their minds.

As I walked home, I mused deeply on the scene I had just quitted, and endeavoured to trace the reason, why a number of my fellow-creatures, maintained by the charity of their parish, when

they were incapable of maintaining themselves, should be so unhappy. I soon found the reason to be a want of humility. Of all the Christian graces this is the most necessary for our happiness. Those who are most sensible how little they deserve, will seldom feel mortification at the little they may receive. They will consider, that, having forfeited both spiritual and temporal blessings by sin, every thing short of its due punishment is mercy. They will view men as instruments in the hands of God, to convey to them undeserved kindnesses, or deserved chastisements. This is that poverty of spirit, on which our Lord pronounced his first blessing; and which is a needful qualification for the enjoyment of heaven itself, where gratitude, the offspring of humility, produces in every spirit the unceasing work of praise.

If then, humility is the way to contentment here, and blessedness hereafter, it is worth our while to enquire, by what means such a disposition is attainable. We are told by the inspired Apostle St. James, "That every good and perfect gift is from above," and that, "if any lack wisdom they must ask of God." David also says, "He giveth grace." But not to multiply quotations on the subject, which are to be found in almost every page of Scripture, the words of our Lord are decisive, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good things to your children; how much more

shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him?" And that one of the fruits of this Holy Spirit is humbleness of mind, we are informed in many other places. The necessity of prayer then, in this case, is clearly to be seen as the first means. Another means to produce this disposition is frequent meditation on the example of our Lord and Saviour, who set before us a perfect pattern of humility. This subject is indeed amongst the wonders of divine love, the depths of which cannot be fathomed by our weak powers of reflection; but as far as we are capable, we shall find it profitable to dwell on the interesting truths, "That he who was Lord of all, became the servant of all;" that he who was the adoration of angels, became a man of sorrows, submitted to every kind of contempt in that world which he himself had created; and though in infinite wisdom and kindness, he had appointed the lowest of his creatures a place of rest and refuge, had not himself where to lay his head. Nor was this the greatest part of our Lord's voluntary humility, for he submitted to become the subject of distress, and even agony of mind, to which bodily sufferings bear no comparison. Here none can follow up the wonderful theme of meditation, but those who have been exposed to those peculiar temptations, compared to "fiery darts of Satan," and the deepest state of spiritual desertion. Such can accompany their kind Lord to the wilderness, to the

garden of Gethsemane, and comprehend in some measure the nature of that "travail of his soul," when it was poured out as "an offering for sin." Surely the impression, which a view of such astonishing facts must leave on the mind will be that of deep humility! Who can help feeling the deepest self-abasement, and being reconciled to a state of poverty, when he considers that the Lord of glory himself has passed through it?

There is another means, though of less importance, which would tend to promote contentment; and that is, frequently to compare our own lot with that of others. Surely could the inhabitants of our English poor-house, view the cabin of the Irish peasant without a chimney, his unsacked straw-bed, walled round with bricks, giving the idea of a resting place for the dead, rather than the living, he would survey with delight his decent accommodations. Could he visit the hut of the Laplander, exposed to overwhelming snows, and the more dreadful destruction of devouring beasts, how would he congratulate himself on the safety of his English habitation! And could he know exactly the condition of thousands of his poor fellow-creatures, driven from their homes by the cruel hands of unfeeling soldiers—the victims of fire, of plunder, and all the horrid evils of war, how would the lowest peaceful spot and condition of his own country, be raised in his estimation! ..

Let none of my readers suppose, that I mean to carry my exhortations to humble contentment so far, as to check the noble spirit of independence becoming every rank of life. That base-born spirit, which is willing to be obliged to charity for its daily supplies, without a struggle to prevent it, deserves nothing but contempt. I like to hear from my poor neighbours, "I'll work my fingers to the bone, before I'll go upon the parish:"—And I like still better, to hear them add, "or before my father or mother shall go to the work-house." I trust the expression does not always arise from pride and ingratitude, but from that honest love of independence, which I wish to cultivate. I am also sensible, that no accommodations their parish work-house can bestow, will equal those they might experience in their own clean and decent cottage, surrounded by their relations and acquaintance, and where they may enjoy real liberty, the natural delight of every human breast. But when, by age or infirmities, my poor neighbour is unavoidably placed in that situation, I earnestly recommend him to adopt the foregoing sentiments, as those alone which can soothe and reconcile his mind. Alas! the unconverted man will neither be disposed to pray nor meditate; but though in an unrenewed state when he entered the poor-house, yet he may not so continue. The merciful God has a purpose to answer in all his appointments, and "he does not willingly afflict." Notwithstanding

his having spent the days of his youth in folly and sin, God gives him now time and space for repentance, in a safe and quiet habitation, where no other care but that of his soul need intrude. Should the grace of God here visit him, let him daily reflect on the great change that awaits him at death. Heaven must be heaven to the *richest* believer : though cut off in the midst of his choicest pleasures, he will undoubtedly have his happiness increased beyond conception. But think what it will be to the *poorest* ! to one racked, perhaps with pain, or worn out by old age ! To the friendless, the prisoner, or the persecuted ! Oh may the heart-consoling thought have its full influence on the mind of every poor believer, who may read this page, and help him to *wait patiently*, as well as to *hope* quietly for the salvation of his God.

CHAP. IV.

Character of Mr. Peach.

PASSING by a window well decorated with wigs of different colours, shapes, and sizes, it occurred to my recollection, that this must belong to the *top barber, Humphrey Preach*, mentioned by the widow at the work-house; and having for some weeks determined on a new purchase, I instantly resolved to avail myself of her recommendation. On casting my eye upon the name over the door, I observed it was not *Preach*, but *Peach*; as the Christian name answered, I concluded my ear had deceived me. I entered an empty shop, and thumping with my stick, advanced step by step in expectation of an answer. All was silent. I then tried without success the effect of a loud call on the name of the master. The door of a small room at the further end of the shop was open, and I boldly entered. Another door which was shut I ventured to open, and discovered a neat well-furnished kitchen, but no trace or sound of an inhabitant. I then returned

into the room and seated myself, resolved to await the issue. The family library lay on the window-seat, which was soon inspected, as it consisted only of the Bible, Prayer-Book, Pilgrim's Progress, and Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns. The walls were ornamented with a few neatly framed pictures, containing the history of the Prodigal Son ; and the chimney-piece with cups and saucers, with a tea-pot in the centre. Two brown oaken tables, and six chairs, a neat floor cloth, and a mahogany tea-board, which answered the purpose of a looking-glass, completed the furniture. As I sat viewing with admiration the general cleanliness and neatness apparent, I concluded that *Mr. Peach* was indebted to some female inmate, most probably wife, or daughter, though their absence reflected much on their discretion. After sitting a full half hour in solitary suspense, the master of the house entered, and expressed in a civil manner his concern that I should have waited. He said, his wife and daughter had left home early in the morning, to see a sick relation, a few miles off, and that he was forced to carry home a gentleman's wig, he had promised him should be finished that morning. I accepted his excuse very readily, as it affected myself, but expressed my surprise at his desertion of his house. " Ah ! Sir," he replied, " I can trust God with my house, and all it contains." " And you can tempt God too, as well as trust him," I replied. " But what could I do, Sir," rejoined he, " I had

promised the gentleman his wig, I could get no one to carry it, and the lock to the house-door is out of repair, so I have a couple of bolts within side." There was some difficulty in the case I acknowledged, which would all have been avoided by a little prudent forecast, for, in the first place, the promise should not have been made on the uncertain method of conveyance, and in the next, the house-door lock ought to have been mended immediately. I soon convinced the honest barber of his folly and presumption. To the generality of persons, an exhortation to the use of means, for the security of worldly property, would be quite unnecessary. Even after they have laudably adopted their prudent measures, what anxious thoughts do they harbour for their success, and how little are they disposed to trust even for a blessing on their care. Yet such is the strange inconsistency of human nature, these same persons can trust, or rather presume on the mercy of God toward their souls, though they neglect every means he has afforded them to work out their salvation. They expect to derive all the advantage of Christian knowledge, without studying the Bible. They expect to partake of the privileges of the true believer, without even taking the trouble to enquire into the nature of Christian faith. They expect the pardon of their sins, without the forsaking of them. They expect to grow in grace, without prayer and watchfulness. In a word, they

expect heaven, without any preparation of heart, to enjoy the happiness of it. This is a delusion of infinite importance, where the neglect of means will prove the destruction of the soul, for let it never be forgotten, that although God sometimes converts the sinner by an act of sovereign grace, there is no warrant in his blessed word to expect it. Having both in spiritual and temporal affairs, used with thankfulness the means appointed for their several purposes, they may safely cast their care upon God, in the confidence that he careth for them.

I did not feel less esteem on the whole for Humphrey on account of the display of presumption he had made, for I know too well the frailties of men, to be offended on all occasions by their discovery. After adjusting the business which chiefly led me to his house, I mentioned my visit to the work-house, and the short account given me by the widow of his predecessor, I also expressed my wish to hear from him a few more particulars, as I understood he visited him in his last illness. "With all my heart, Sir," said he, "'twas mournful visiting to be sure, but I felt myself called to it, as how I had known him in better days, and being both of a trade too. No good ever comes of forsaking the trade we have been brought up to, and so I told him over and over. I have been barber and wig-maker these five and thirty years, (counting in my

apprenticeship,) and in all that time, one body has wanted me to change for one thing, and another for another, but I was'nt to be moved; and now my name's up, and 'tis who can buy my wigs." "Then you have advanced their prices, I suppose," said I. "Not a shilling, Sir," replied Humphrey. "They are no better than they were twenty years ago, and I would no more impose on my customers, than I would under-sell my neighbours. There's a fair market price for every thing." "Where then lies the advantage of your name being *up*, as you term it?" "Credit, Sir, credit. Who does not wish to excel in their business, and gain the praise of their customers?" As the sentiment appeared to me the honest love of fame, uninfluenced by covetousness, or false ambition, I wished it prevailed more, especially among our servants, who are too apt to content themselves with a sort of half reputation, only sufficient to carry them from place to place, forgotten by every family they quit, because they took no pains to excel in any branch of their business. Whereas, if like the barber in question, they desired their names to be *up*, they might be remembered by their superiors even to old age, and assisted in times of poverty. "May you long live to enjoy your well-earned reputation, Mr. Peach," said I, "and if you die first, I'll write your epitaph."

A young lad now entered the shop, and told Mr. Peach that his father still continued very ill, and

would be obliged to him for a little more *shaving money*. Mr. P. unlocked a drawer full of half-pence and counting him out half-a-crown's worth, told him to take that to his father, and tell him he would look in upon him in the evening. My curiosity was raised to know what was meant by *shaving money*, and I took the liberty of enquiring: "Why, Sir," replied Mr. Peash, "I have found another advantage from my name being *up*. It has brought me much good business, and enabled me to put out my two boys in the world, that within these last two years, I have been able to help a little my poor neighbours. It is true I had no money to spare, but the thought came into my head, that I might give them a little *time*, so I told them I would not for the future take their pence for shaving, but shave them for nothing. They were very well pleased as you may suppose, Sir, but the scheme did not answer my purpose, for I soon found the penny went for a quid of tobacco, or another pint of drink. I then took their pence again, and gave them at the month's end to their wives and daughters: but as I perceived no difference in their houses or appearance, I concluded 'twas of little service to them neither; so I resolved to lay them by in this drawer, and the first who was sick and not able to work, should have them. Some kind body or other, often puts a few half-pence into my shaving-drawer, so that 'tis quite a fund, as one may call it, against a rainy day. I always see myself to the laying of it

out, and then I sit and read, or talk half an hour, or so, for it pleased God to call me when I was very young to the knowledge of his ways, and I defy any one who knows them himself, not to wish every body else to know them too. Oh! Sir, if it was but possible to take all one's neighbours to heaven with one." "Spoke in the true spirit of Christian love and zeal," replied I, "and by your appeal to me it should seem as though you suspected I held the same principle. But how do your poor neighbours take your pious interference?" "I pass through evil report and good report," returned Humphrey, "I have gained a letter to my name by it, for they all call me *Preach*, but I don't mind that. Indeed, before I settled here, I did preach now and then, in a poor dark village, which, thank God, is now enlightened by abler hands; for I have small gifts in that way. I have no book-learning, and have seen very little of the world, but as "the world by wisdom knows not God," that does not fret me much, only it ought to keep me from intruding into matters too high for me. In my humble way I trust I serve my Lord and Master, and he is not an unjust one, expecting to reap where he has not sown. Here and there I find some who cannot read, (thank God that will be a rare case soon) well, I can read to them, and for the most part they are willing to hear. Then, though I can't dispute about gospel-doctrines for lack of proper words, I can say what they are, as

the Bible lays them down. And when my heart is warmed by pondering over them, and they are applied by God's Spirit to those I talk with, Oh! it would do your heart good, Sir, to see the effect."

CHAP. V.

The History of poor Charles.

“**Y**ou mean I suppose,” returned I, “the effect on the lives and conduct of your hearers.” “I do, Sir,” said Humphrey, “or I should talk, and they would hear to no saving purpose. I wish you had known Squire M.’s gardener before his conversion, but mayhap you don’t know him now, he’s the tall man, who always stands in the isle opposite the pulpit. Well, he was a surly ill-tempered husband, a quarrelsome neighbour, and a sad waster of his master’s property. He prided himself on being the first boxer in the county; but the happiest day in his life was the day he was beat by great Jack, the butcher. As he lay in bed, full of sores and bruises, I went to see him, for, thought I, his pride will be humbled at having lost the day, and if he has a grain of feeling left, he will be grateful to his wife for nursing him, which I knew she would do very tenderly. Sure enough this was the case, and he heard all I had to say very

readily, and begged me to come again. After he got well he went to church ; and to make short of the story, he has been a changed man ever since. Now, though he had every reason to hope that his sins were pardoned, and would never rise up in judgment against him, he never lost the recollection of them, so far as not to sorrow on their account ; and especially the thought of the wilful waste he had made for so many years, would cross his mind. For the family he served were very kind-hearted, and used to desire him to give away the spare garden-stuff, and he made them believe he did so. Instead of this, however, he would throw it on the dunghill, and let the fruit rot under the trees, when his master and mistress were at their town-house, which they were more than half the year. But now he tries all he can to make amends to the poor neighbours ; and is as careful of every cabbage, as though it was worth its weight in gold. Now, Sir, (continued Humphrey) is not this the meaning of our Lord's commandment—*Bring forth works meet for repentance.*?" "Undoubtedly," I replied, "and the want of time and opportunity to prove in this manner, the sincerity of repentance, is what makes death-bed conversions so uncertain to the surviving friends. That thought brings us to the point we seem to have lost sight of, the case of the poor player."

I am glad to see conversation does not prevent

your working, (for he had from the commence-
of it taken a wig in hand) therefore I scruple the
less to detain you a little longer. Humphrey
continued his discourse. "I never wanted learning
so much in my life, as I did in visiting poor Charles;
for all he harped upon for a long while was, that
the Bible was all false, and he defied me to prove
it otherwise. I, in my turn, called on him to
prove it was false, which, as he could not do either,
we stood on equal ground. But there seemed to
be no end to our unprofitable disputes, 'till one
day our worthy parson Goodall, to whom I menti-
oned the case, went with me: I never shall forget
the substance of what he said to Charles so
long as I live. First of all he proved from what he
knew from history-books, that all the prophecies in
the Old Testament had been fulfilled, which respected
the overthrow of the nations. Then he spoke of
the Jews, and how they believed their own Scrip-
tures, and continued a dispersed people over the
face of the whole world, exactly as it was foretold
they should. It was very amusing to hear of this,
and wonderful to think how the providence of God
brought it all about. But when he spoke of the
prophecies which respected the coming of our blessed
Lord, and shewed how they were fulfilled in his
birth, sufferings, and death, beginning at Genesis
and ending at Malachi, this was profitable indeed.
'Tis true I was no stranger to this part of his dis-
course, but one is apt to consider it only a little at

a time, and not like parson Goodall, with our bibles in hand, turning from one verse to another to see how exactly they accord together.

This account of the matter made Charles look about him, and he frankly owned he never considered it much, but had hearkened to the sayings of his gay companions, who pretended they had examined into it. This was a point gained, and I hoped on my next visit, to find him prepared for some application of the truths of the Bible to his state, for you know, Sir, the mere believing the letter of it, will never save a soul. But, alas! a dying condition is a sad time to begin the work of reflection. His breath and his cough had been so bad that he could attend to nothing else. I left him, thinking to see him no more: but in a few hours he got so much better, that he sent me word that he was sure he should be well again, and wished to see me. I found him reading in one of his play-books, and could not engage his attention to any thing better, for he said he had only sent for me to make *merry* now he was getting well, and that he expected some of his old friends, the players, who had promised to bring him some money that evening. As I had no relish for such company, I would not stay; but calling in again a few days after, I found that neither they nor their money had made appearance, and poor Charles as bad as ever; for such was the na-

ture of his disorder to be always changing. Now, again, he was in no fit condition to hear or think. Then his mind was further perplexed about temporal matters, for he had nothing to depend on but the bounty of his neighbours, and sometimes there was not a sixpenny piece in the room. If he had been a poor *believer*, there would have been a hundred promises to apply, but I felt I had no warrant to say, *all these things shall be added*, to one who was not seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness. 'Twas no wonder I was puzzled what to do for the best, for so was parson Goodall, who seeing the weakness of his head and mind, left off talking, and went to prayer with him. This seemed to affect his *feelings* at least, for the tears would run down his cheeks, mixed with the cold sweats that foreboded his speedy departure. Well, God knew his heart, and what passed there at those seasons."

Humphrey paused to give respite to his own feelings, which seemed agitated by the recollection of his poor neighbour's case; then added, "He asked to see me a few hours before he died; but though I went as soon as possible, he was speechless when I arrived; yet I thought he looked as though he knew me, so I took hold of his hand: Brother, said I, have you any hope through grace, that your sins are pardoned? If you have, squeeze me by the hand. Oh! Sir, *he drew it away, and cast on my face such a look of distress as I shall never*

forget. But perhaps it was occasioned by a sudden pain, and he might not have heard what I said : so about an hour after he died."

I had too much respect to the feelings of friendship and admiration of that principle of charity, which *loppeth* all things, manifested by Humphrey in this account of a death-bed scene, to express my own sentiments. The little history spoke powerfully to myself, and I trust will also to my readers. "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." How often does death approach suddenly and unexpectedly? *There is no space left for repentance* ; as the tree falls so must it lie. But even when it comes slowly on by lingering decay, who can ensure vigour of understanding, and tranquility of mind, sufficient for the great task of "working out their salvation?"

As the wise King Solomon observes, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens." This is well-known by the husbandman, the tradesman, and even the man of pleasure, who all observe some order in their different pursuits. As it is in temporal, so it is in spiritual concerns. Youth and health are the seasons for enquiry, and improvement in knowledge; more advanced years is the time for active service in the good cause; and sickness or old age is the season when nothing remains to do, but meekly to

resign to the will of God, and meditate on his gracious promises to those, who by "patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality." If it be said by any that God is a Sovereign, and chooses the season in which we shall be called to the knowledge of his ways, I answer, this is a truth which affords strong consolation to the aged, who are warranted to hope they are of the number made partakers of grace at the eleventh hour; but furnishes no pretence for youthful delay. The master of the vineyard is described as going out at different hours, and calling whom he would: and so does he now by the preaching of his gospel, and the disposals of his providence. The youngest hearer is called, and if he neglect the invitation, he can plead no excuse. Why should he not suppose he is chosen for a monument of mercy, to glorify his Lord by devoting his *best* days to *his* service, and by being made an honoured instrument for the good of others? "Secret things belong to God alone." All who hear of salvation have a right to hope, that to them is the *word of salvation sent*: and all who turn away from the joyful sound have reason to fear it may never be repeated. No mention is made in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, of objections being made to the call given. They all went immediately, and received their promised wages. Far different was the case of those bidden to the marriage.—They made light of it, going their ways to their farms and their merchandize—and they *were destroyed*.

I took leave of Mr. Humphrey Peach (or Preach, if the reader likes his name of character best) with sentiments of great esteem, and the intention of frequently joining in conversation with him. I felt too much gratified at finding a new proof of the ability imparted to those in an humble station for usefulness. How much occasion might numbers of the rich, the learned, and the great, find to blush in the company of this pious barber, while they saw his disposal of a few pence, heard the plain sense, the dictates of an enlightened reason, by the word and Spirit of God, which he spoke, and saw his love of fame confined within the just boundaries which they so frequently overstep; and by so doing, plunge themselves into ruin, and lose the talent entrusted to their care!

CHAP. VI.

The Village Politicians.

PUNCTUALLY to the hour promised, Mr. Peach appeared with my new wig; the description of which it is unnecessary to lay before my readers, suffice it to say, Mr. P. assured me, it reduced my age at least ten years, to the eyes of every unprejudiced beholder. As soon as I had leisure to withdraw my attention from my own face, I observed an air of sadness spread over his naturally cheerful countenance, at which I expressed my concern and curiosity. "No one shews a little fretting," replied he, "sooner than I do; and I must own I have fretted ever since I saw you, Sir, at some news my wife and daughter brought home that evening from the village just by. For you must know, five or six honest-hearted fellows, as one may call them—one of them a relation, and all of them acquaintances of mine, have taken it into their heads to meet together, twice a week, at a public-house, to drink and talk about politics.

I tremble lest they should come to an untimely end: I understand all their conversation tends to abuse their lawful governors, and encourage a discontented and riotous spirit.

No one knows what a flame a little fire may kindle. One fool makes many. I was in London at the time of the great riots, and little thought I, when I heard a few boys cry out, *no popery*, what the end of it would be. Except for the purpose of preaching and praying, no good ever came of a parcel of poor men meeting together. Why, we hear how rich men cannot meet without drinking, gaming, or quarrelling." "But Mr. Peach," interrupted I, "you would not cut off your poor friends from society. Man you know is a social being." "So he is, Sir," returned he, "and what can be more social and pleasant than to turn into a neighbour's house for an hour or two after work, and eat a bit of bread and cheese; the children all quiet in bed: or to stand on a fine summer's evening at one's door, and converse freely with a friend, only taking care, that neither lies nor scandal be brought forward by either of us. Now this is what any worldly man may enjoy without hurting his health, or his pocket." I then asked Humphrey, what the employments of these men were. "The head man amongst them," returned he, "is Farmer Grumbleton, and I am the most afraid of mischief from him, because he buys stock every year, and

money you know, Sir, makes a man of consequence, and able to bribe in his own cause. The next is the Blacksmith of the village, and he's the last one would wish to be of a mutinous spirit, because his shop is often full of post-boys, coachmen, and horse-jockies, who ride all over the country retailing the folly, which he deals out in wholesale. Then there's Will Shape just out of his time, who is got already into a main good business for making smart liveries, and though the shell is not off his head, he seems a knowing chick, amongst the servant maids and foot-boys. I'm not much afraid of my simple Simon of a cousin, the stone-mason, only I know the last fool has him, and as he sits sawing in his box at the road's side, there's no saying who may pass by to urge on his wild fancies, pricked up at his political club. Poor soul, if he comes to be hanged, I'm sure 'twill be in the place of a wiser. As for Joe, the miller, he'll swear black's white, to please Farmer Grumbleton; and Matthew Spade, the nurseryman, is a scholar, and drives the quill, so he may do more harm than all the rest put together." "And truly," added I, "in my opinion, is the likeliest to come to the dreadful end you anticipate for the whole set.—Well, can any thing be done to prevent mischief amongst them?"

"Why, Sir," resumed Mr. Peach, "that's what I have been casting about and about in my

mind ever since I heard of it. At one time, I thought of going to talk with them, but they'll only laugh at what comes from old Humphrey *Preach*." "As you say there is a scholar amongst them," said I, "what think you of a written expostulation?"

Humphrey's countenance brightened at the question. "I do think, Sir, it might do." For as I said before, they are honest-hearted men on the whole, (the farmer's the worst) and before their passions are heated too far, they might hear reason." "Well then," replied I, "the trial shall be made directly, as the first essay of intellect under my new wig." "You had better write in your night-cap, Sir," replied Humphrey, "I once served an author, and he was always grumbling that the hairs of his wig sat *nine bobs square*, as the saying is, and sure enough so they did, though I dressed them every week. 'Twas the greatest mystery in the world to me, how it happened, 'till one day by accident the servant shewed me into his study, instead of the parlour. His back was to the door, so that he did not see me come in. He was writing away like mad, with great books piled up on both sides of him. Every now and then, however, he stopped to take breath, and recollect himself I suppose. Then was all the mischief done, for he beset his head in such a manner with both hands, scratching every hair in his wig the wrong

way, that at last I could bear it no longer, but cried out, ' Stop, Sir, or you'll not have a curl left.'—Pray, Sir, don't write this letter in your new wig."

I promised compliance with the advice, and on Humphrey's departure sat down to my work with my best cotton night-cap drawn over my ears. Line after line followed each other, and line after line received the disgraceful mark of oblivion. The sheet finished, proved no other mark of intelligence to the credit of its author, than his judgment in blotting. Not wholly discouraged, I seized a new one, and tried the effect of besetting, as Humphrey termed it, both sides of my head, after the manner of his customer, the author. This too proved ineffectual, and at length I yielded up the point, dreading as much to meet the disappointed hopes of the honest barber, as the poor dependant scribbler, the critique of his wary bookseller. With hasty steps I saw him approaching early the next morning. But how was my anxiety relieved, when I heard him exclaim—" Sir, I have thought of another scheme! I don't think writing that letter will be of any use at all. But I do think, that if you would but condescend for once to dress like a poor working man, and go to the public-house, where they meet, and talk with them, it would be more likely to serve the purpose."

Such was my vanity, that I felt well pleased at the opportunity of concealing from Humphrey, a truth, every author would like, if possible, to conceal even from himself—an unsuccessful attempt at writing good sense. I assured him of my willingness to adopt any plan likely to convey reason into unreasonable minds, and agreed with him in the opinion, that in some cases, (perhaps the present) a little well-timed discourse might be the likeliest to effect it. For in conversation we meet the humour and objections of the speaker, which he concealed from the knowledge of the writer. “But,” said I, “would they not be more disposed to hear reason from me in my proper person? Surely they must suspect at least, that their superiors in station and information, must know better what is right.” Humphrey gave it as his judgment, that it was more likely they would be awed by my appearance in full dress. “For, Sir,” added he, “you must be sensible you are not an every day looking gentleman.” I then raised the supposition that they would admit no one into their club-room, besides themselves. But Mr. Peach said, the landlord of the Turk’s-head was a wary one, and declared he would have no shut up room, that might lay him open to suspicion, and be the means of having his licence taken away; “For,” continued Humphrey, “the new justice of the county does his duty, and gives a sharp look out, especially into the public-houses, and that makes me have double

fears. Besides, going dressed like a gentleman, mayhap he would not be willing for you to go amongst them, for 'tis said by some, though I trust without any truth, that here and there *a-so-say* gentleman, (that is a man who has got money, which never yet alone made a real one) is found to encourage a riotous and grumbling spirit amongst his poor neighbours."

Humphrey's arguments seemed so much the result of consideration, that I consented to his proposal without more opposition, and the important arrangement of my dress only remained. He thought my gardening coat too good, and neither of my old hats and wigs sufficiently disguising to conceal me from the knowledge of my acquaintance, as I passed through our own village, which he supposed I would wish to do. I said, it might be as well, as it would prevent any gossip's story of my transformation into an old miser.

Mr. Peach further informed me, that the evening of their meeting, to the great vexation of his cousin, the stone cutter's wife, was fixed on a Monday, when having the most money in his pocket, her husband spent the most in drink. He then took leave of me, under an engagement to bring a suitable dress for the next Monday evening, which he said he knew he had by him.

I submitted to every change in my outward appearance which Mr. Peach thought adviseable, and entertained no apprehensions of discovery after surveying myself in my large pier glass. Humphrey then viewed me with the greatest complacency and then exclaimed, "Your own mother's son could not know you, Sir." He then expressed his hopes that suitable thoughts would arise in my mind, and as I walked along took leave of me, with no other hint, but the caution, that I would not shoot over their heads, by shewing too much of my learning.

CHAP. VII.

Political Conversation.

WITH my stout walking-stick in my hand, my well-worn beaver slouched over my face, and as awkward a gait as I could assume, I entered the *Turk's-Head*, and ordering a can of home brewed and a pipe at the bar, I posted into a room whose door stood open, and which seemed the best below. I had scarcely seated myself in the chimney corner, (though not the exact season for the enjoyment of such a situation) when Farmer Grumbleton entered, followed close after by the miller. "Plague take the dry season," said the farmer, "I shan't have a blade of after grass." "You have had a good hay season tho'," observed the latter. "What of that," quoth the farmer, "the cattle must be turned out, and a small crop agrees very well with some lands second hand." "Very true Mr. Grumbleton," returned the miller. "The cattle must be turned out, and a second crop is a good thing." The Stonemason came in. "They are going to put up prayer

in the Church for rain," continued the miller: "as I'm told." "Where's the use of that?" cried the Mason, "it will never rain 'till the wind changes." "Aye, aye," observed the farmer, "the parsons do well to pray for the tithes of another hay-rick; and if I go to Church I'll pray too."

The Blacksmith and Nursery-man soon joined the party; and the latter drew a bundle of papers out of his pocket, and threw them on the table, observing he might begin reading directly, for it was no use to wait for Will Shape: he was a flincher, and had given up the cause. All expressed their surprise and curiosity to know for what reason. Mr. Spade informed them, that Lord B——'s steward had been recommending Will to make his new liveries against the election; but his Lordship had received secret intelligence of Will's political sentiments, and as they were in opposition to his own, he refused to employ him. "Now," continued Mr. Spade, "was Will beset by his old grandmother, his mother and sister, (all of whom, you know, he helps to maintain) and by his Lordship's steward besides, to give up, and so at last he consented, and by dint of great influence on the steward's part, he has got the order and they say is likely to get more, if he does not turn round again, which we must try to make him."

"No, no," said the farmer, "let him alone, we want no turn-coats." "Aye," said the stonemason, "it makes out the saying, *'nine tailors make a man.'*"

Now the Stone-mason and I differed widely in our opinion of Will Shape's character, for mine was instantly fixed, that he had given a decided proof of possessing the distinguishing ornament of man—humanity.

I observed the first object these politicians had in view, was that of obtaining a supply of liquor previous to their consultations. The Farmer placed a large goblet of brandy and water before him. The nursery-man a bottle of cyder, probably out of a laudable partiality to the produce of his own orchard; while the rest, like myself were content with the less costly beverage of home brewed. The newspapers of the day were then produced, and read in an audible voice by Mr. Spade, who commented as he went along.—“WAYS AND MEANS”—“Aye, that's to raise more taxes, because we are not taxed enough already.” “There's no new tax on funded property; is there?” eagerly enquired the farmer, who receiving an answer in the negative, seemed to sip his brandy and water with a new relish.” “PETITIONS FROM—AND FROM—ORDERED TO LIE ON THE TABLE. Just so always,” exclaimed the reader, striking his hand on that before him, “these men in power, order every motion for a redress of our grievances, to *lie on the table*, and there they may lie to the world's end, for ought they care. WAR OFFICE,—ADMIRALTY OFFICE,—all a list of promotions, and dear bought victories. BREAD RISING AGAIN.” Then turning

to the miller—"We must pull all the mills about our ears before it will be any cheaper." The colour in the miller's face mounted to the deepest scarlet. "'Tis no fault of the miller's," exclaimed he, confirming his assertion by an oath, and glancing a look at the farmer. "Nor of the farmer, I'll swear too," said Mr. Grumbleton. "Whose fault is it then?" asked the reader. "Why, the great folks to be sure," rejoined he, "who are always raising the price of land, so that no honest farmer can live now-a-days." "Some farmers," resumed the miller, "wont bring their grain to market, 'till it will fetch the price they choose." Mr. Grumbleton took a hearty sip from his goblet, and desired Mr. Spade to proceed. "EXECUTION OF RIOTERS—That's downright murder; I will maintain every man in the kingdom has a right to stand up in any way he pleases for his rights." "I don't know that," replied the Miller, "he has no right to pull down mills, nor would it answer any purpose, for if all the mills were pulled down, how would the flour be ground? 'tis not the work of an hour to re-build a mill." "Better by half," said the Stone-mason, "go in a main strong body, and pull down the Parliament-house. Then, when these great folks saw what we could do when roused to it, they'd look about them a bit, and make peace, and that would make bread cheap." "No bad notion," cried the blacksmith, "and I'm the man to make tools for the work. I and some hundreds more in the trade,

could soon make grappling irons, and all sorts of irons fit for the purpose." "Before we can proceed so far as that," resumed Mr. Spade, "we must form a regular plan of organization, and I have some secret papers in my pocket, given me by a gentleman, who does not of course choose his name to be mentioned." Mr. Spade now glanced his eye round to see if all was private before he produced the papers, when for the first time he discovered me. "Ah! old codger," he exclaimed, "where are you from? What do you know about the world?"

I shook out the ashes of my pipe against the empty bars of the grate, twisted my scratch bob from off my left ear, and looking as knowing as I was able, answered, "old codger could say something."

Agreeably to my wishes they all burst out a laughing, and with one accord made a motion for me to join them at the table. They observed my mug was empty, and generously offered to replenish it, which I readily accepted, for I know the refusal of kindness is painful to the generous heart. "Well, old friend," said the farmer, "can you tell us when it will rain?" "Most likely," replied I, "when it pleases God to turn the wind." "I said," observed the Mason, "we should have no rain till the wind changed." Mr. Spade repeated his

question. "' What do you know about the world?" " I know," returned I, "'tis a very good one as God makes it, and a very bad one as we make it; and I know the wisest man *in* it, is he who tries to pass the easiest *through* it; that is, who studies to be quiet, and to do his own business." " Aye, that's a maxim that will do very well for old codgers like you," returned Mr. Spade, " but we young ones think of those who are to come after us, and we do right to seek for reform in the nation." " And we do best of all," returned I, " when we leave works we don't understand to be done by those who do. Thank God there's some *good* as well as *bad* parliament-men, and if He grants a blessing, (not else) they'll bring about a reformation in a quiet, right way." " And poor folks starve in the mean while," said Mr. Spade, again taking up the newspaper, from which he read a melancholy account of the distresses of poor manufacturers, omitting to turn to the side which told of the charitable assistance given them, and then concluded with the observation, " that all was owing to the war, and that as nothing but peace could remedy the evil, the great folks should be made to make peace by foul means, if they would not by fair, and that the nation at large had only now to settle what was the best way to set about it." " And then," returned I, " while we are fighting with one another, slap dash comes in Boney and takes us altogether." " So much the better," exclaimed the

Blacksmith, to my great surprise and vexation: "I tell you what, some French gentlemen called the other day at my shop to have their horses shod, and they talked to one another (I making believe not to hear them) in their broken English way, what a rare country this would be, if there was but a revolution, which, they said, there would never be unless the French landed. They said all the bank-money would go to pay off the national debt, and every body knows that if that was paid off we should have no taxes." "That would not be a fair way of paying it off," observed Mr. Grumbleton, "but what else did they say?" "They said," returned the Blacksmith, "that if there was no King, there would be no court, and if there was no court, there would be no place-men, and if there were no place-men, there would be no treasury, and if there was no treasury, there would be no abuse of treasury-money." "Well," returned the farmer, "and did they say how the nation was to be governed, if all these things were made away with?" "Their horses were ready before they came to that part of their discourse: but it was good to hear it as far as it went," concluded the Blacksmith. "Truly," said I, "as good as to hear that if we had no house, we should have no rent to pay. I suppose these wise French gentlemen did not say, that if their countrymen landed, they would set fire to our villages, abuse our wives and daughters, and after

murdering our good old King, and turning out all the great men, take possession of their power and places, and shew us the difference between real and imaginary calamities.



CHAP. VIII.

The Stone-Mason's Cottage.

“**E**VERY man can talk in his own cause,” observed the farmer, “and I don’t pin my faith on the sleeve of a French-man, I don’t want old England to fall under *their* management, tho’ I should like a revolution as well as any one, chiefly, because if the *state* were overturned, the *church* would too; and then, as the French-men say, ‘if there was no *church*, there would be no *parsons*; and if there were no *parsons*, there would be no *tithes*;’ and if there were no *tithes*, one might look round one’s farm-yard and say this is all *my own*.” “You can’t prove that if there were no churches, there would be no parsons,” observed Mr. Spade; “you forget the meetings.” “True,” returned Mr. Grumbleton, “I suppose they would swarm more than ever; but one can’t have every thing to one’s mind, and tho’ I hate every one of them more than I do *old nick*, I hate more the man I’m obliged to give money to.”

"If I may be so bold in my turn," said I, "as to ask a question of you gentlemen, I would ask what was the cause of the war, which truly we know is the cause of most of our grievances;" "Our ministers," replied Mr. Spade, assuming the most important air he had yet done, "knew no more what they went to war for, than the child unborn." "Alas! poor silly gentlemen," returned I, "then they deserve our pity; and why don't they make peace?" "Because," returned Mr. Spade, "they have not sense enough to see the advantage of it, or to know how to set about it." "Alas! poor gentlemen," repeated I, "'tis a folly then in us to be angry with them. I don't see anything can be done by us, (as we can't be parliament-men ourselves) but to pray night and day, that God would put knowledge into their heads, and grace into their hearts." "But all the world, Sir, is fond of fighting." "Do you know why other nations make war?" "I never," returned Mr. Spade, "dive into any other politics, but what relates to my own country." "'Tis a pity you don't then, Sir," replied I, "because I dare say, if you did, you would know all the sides of the question: for mayhap the politicians of one country, may force the politicians of another to make war, and at this very moment, we, only for want of knowing the true state of the case, may be blaming the *English*, instead of the *French* Government. When I was a young man," continued I,

“ I dived a little into politics, and found out the cause of war, and the older I grow, the more and more I am convinced that I know the true one.” The party regarded me with attention. I looked at each,—“ You, and you, and I,” concluding with myself, and placing my hand on my breast, “ have caused the war.” “ How do you make that out ?” they exclaimed. “ *Sin*,” returned I, “ brought death.—*Sin* brought those passions which cause war, such as envy, ambition, revenge and cruelty.” “ Granted,” said Mr. Spade, “ but still we have nothing to do with making war, ’tis not *our* envy, ambition, cruelty, and revenge that has done it.” “ No truly,” said I, “ we have to be thankful that we have not had the *power* given us to make war. But we have all more or less made private war on one another, by our evil passions of one sort or another; and being, in common, sinners, all must expect to partake of the chastisements due to sinners : one of the heaviest of which inflicted in this world, is war. Instead of dwelling on those parts of our public newspapers, which treat of debates and parliament-house quarrels, we had better turn to the battles and dreadful marches made by the destroying armies, whether victorious or vanquished, it makes little difference to the poor countries through which they march. Then grumble if you can at paying your taxes, instead of *blood* paid by millions of your fellow-sufferers, and be thankful for the half loaf given *you*, and

denied them: or if you want to love your native land, go to London, and see the hospitals, the charities of every sort that can be named for the sick, the aged, the destitute, and the ignorant, and then wish, if you can, to murder, or rob those rich gentlemen, who are the supporters of them. Then look at the popish churches, and the impositions of their priests, the one holding forth every species of error for the support of the other, and learn to prize a church built on the foundation of prophets and apostles, and dread the power of an enemy, devoted to popish darkness."

As I spoke feelingly, I almost forgot my assumed character, till I observed Mr. Spade sliding off his papers from the table into his pocket, evidently under the apprehension that I was some ministerial spy; my language, and I suppose my manner being above the journey-man bricklayer I appeared. The farmer too looked as if he knew not what to make of me—when suddenly rushed in his boy, and looking in face exactly like the one, some of my readers may have heard of, sent to undraw, at the dead of the night, the curtains of a famous king, to acquaint him of a similar disaster, exclaimed, "Master, master, the great rick is all in a flame." "You dog, why did'nt you come sooner?" cried Farmer Grumbleton, starting from his seat, and running out of the Turk's-head followed by all of us, even the landlord not staying us to demand

his payments. "My mistress would have sent," cried the boy, as he followed his master's heels, as soon as it began to smoke, which was just as you turned the corner of thirty acres; but she remembered how angry you were last time she sent for you, about letting the mare out of the pound." The farmer abused in very profane terms his wife's want of distinction between a neighbour's payment of a few shillings, and his own loss of so many pounds. But as soon as he came in sight of his blazing property, he lost all bounds to his rage. This club was imprecated in the abuse, and he swore in the most tremendous terms, that he would never enter the Turk's-head again to sit longer than five minutes.

The inhabitants of the village were soon assembled to view the awful devastation, but I observed few were disposed, unbribed, to assist in stopping its fury. "Burn on," cried one, "'tis as well burnt as hoarded." "Aye," cried another, "he wont be able to outbid honest Tom Trylive, for the team next fair." While a third stood aloof exclaiming, "So 'tis to be hated by one's neighbours!" The farmer in the mean while was dealing out his silver to some, and his promises more liberally to others, till at length he gained sufficient help to prevent further mischief, than the destruction of his most valuable rick: and the villagers dispersed.

As it was now late in the evening, I resolved not to return home, and asked the Stone-mason if he knew of any house where I could sleep. He told me he had a room aloft in his own cottage, if I could lie on straw, with an old rug thrown over me. I readily assured him that would suffice: for I recollected he was Humphrey's cousin, and that circumstance made me more desirous to cultivate his acquaintance. Humphrey too had said that the last fool had him, and this yielding temper was as favourable to the acquisition of wisdom as folly, should a wise man be the last to accost him. I therefore anticipated that my nightly residence at his cottage, might be productive of edification.

We found his wife standing at the door, afraid to leave her cottage and little ones, to take a nearer view of the blazing hay-mow. The sight of a stranger with her husband, seemed to alarm her, especially when he acquainted her I was to sleep in the loft; and I heard her whisper him, "Is he sober?" "As a judge," replied he. The Mason then opened his cupboard-door, and laying two thick slices of fat bacon on two pieces of bread, gave me one, and began eating the other, with a relish unknown to those accustomed to more dainty fare. I began to follow his example after offering part to my hostess, who declined acceptance, having she said eaten her supper an hour before. Seeing my bacon consume rather slowly, the

Mason proposed a large onion for a relish, and on my objecting, made another proposition, that his wife should run for a pot of beer. This I strenuously opposed, at which my hostess looked pleased and surprised. The latter sensation was not a little increased, when I asked if they had a Bible in their cottage, for that I always read a chapter before I went to rest. "A relation of ours, Humphrey Preach, as he's called," replied the wife, "gave us one when we married, but the children got at it, and have torn half of it out; what there is left, you are welcome to see;" reaching down about an hundred leaves without a cover from a high shelf, and covered with dust. As I took it out of her hand, I remarked I had once heard a plain speaking minister say, "The dust of your Bibles will rise up against you at the day of judgment." "God forbid," exclaimed she, evidently impressed by the strength of the expression. I opened the leaves on the 5th chapter of St. Matthew, and read through the beatitudes aloud. I then closed the ragged pages. "A few verses at a time," said I, "well considered, is better than a great number gone through as a school-boy does his lesson. These blessings were pronounced by him who cannot lie. But you see they are made only to a certain description of people. Therefore we must examine ourselves to know whether we are of the description, before we must venture to apply them. Now, one of them seems to come

directly home to the business which took you all to the Turk's-head this evening. "Blessed," says our Lord, 'are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.' Now, if the *peace-makers* only are blessed, what are the *peace-breakers*? And if we are not the children of God, whose children are we?"

CHAP. IX.

Bible Reading and its Effects.

IT is the glory of true religion, that it makes its way to the heart and understanding : a glory no false religion can claim. Indeed the unmeaning rites and ceremonies practised by the poor heathens, cannot pretend to address either the heart or the understanding, and the few wise persons found amongst them, only conform to them from an opinion that they were favourable to the particular modes of government they wished to adopt.

The answer given by the simple Mason to my questions, proved that a wayfaring man knew how to understand an application of Scripture. “Why look ye,” said he, “I don’t wish to belong to the devil, or to lie under the curse of my Maker : but I can’t think that making a stir for the good of the nation is any wickedness. If you can prove it is, I’ll have no more to do with it.” “Blessings

on you master," added his wife, "if you can persuade John from going to the Turk's-head." "It often happens," replied I, "that people are misled by false notions, as to the best way of doing a good work, now if you and I knew how to stir for the good of the nation, it would be right for us to stir: but we only know how to break the peace, and that we are forbidden to do. The Jews in old times were ordered by God himself, speaking by his servant Moses, to seek the peace of every city where they went; and to do them justice, we must say that to this day they are not found amongst rioters. And the first Christians were obedient to every government under which their lot was cast, though by all account the best of them, was not to be compared to old England's. These good Christians were greatly oppressed, but as we read, 'they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had an enduring substance.'"

"Don't you mind John," said his wife, "what Humphrey Preach said last time he was here, when you talked about mending the nation? He said, 'let every body mend one, and then all will be mended,' no man was ever mended by sitting drinking in a public-house, and God never gives his blessing to those who use wicked means, tho' they are overruled sometimes to bring about good ends." "I defy you to say," returned John, "that I have ever come home drunk from

the Turk's-head." "You have only gone four times," replied she, "and you know what a strong head you have got: you owned that you drank Shape, the taylor out, and that the money you spent there would have found the children and I beer the whole week. And don't you mind Humphrey said too, how the going into temptation was like inviting Satan into one's company; and that if you made so free with him in his own houses, he might follow you home to yours." "Well," observed the Mason, "'tis better to have done ARGU'YING any more about it. I was casting in my mind and just going to say it out, when the boy routed us all off, that if Spade was to write a sort of petition in all our names, and send it to the parliament-house, it might do some good in a quiet way." "Why John," said his wife, "do you think the great folks would mind what such as we should say?" "They might," replied the Mason. "Some of them have no pride at all, and will shake hands with a poor man. It would have done your heart good to hear how free the parliament-men talked last election, and how kindly they enquired after the wives and children of the voters, and there was not one in twenty richer than farmer Grumbleton." "Ah!" observed I, "we think much of the condescension of these great folks when they are pleased to shew us any: but 'tis melancholy to think how the best of us neglect to offer petitions to the great ruler of all rulers, and make light of the invitation graci-

ously given by him to the poorest of us to enter into his presence."

I then proposed to my companions joining in prayer before we went to rest, to which the Mason replied he had no objection, if I was scholar enough to make a prayer, which he owned he was not. Here again I remarked, the poor unlearned man stood on an equal footing with the richest and wisest, since both must be taught of the Spirit how to pray, and what to pray for, as well as inclined to the work. The first petition which ought to be for the gift of this Holy Spirit being granted, that person would use the best words and the most suitable, who knew the most of his Bible. It happened indeed sometimes that for want of a ready way of speaking, and the gift of a good memory, even such might not be able to pray aloud in company, but there were prayer-books for them.

Greatly encouraged by the serious air manifest in the countenances of my two companions, I offered up confessions, praises and petitions in the most simple style, particularly among the latter remembering our national wants, and undeserved mercies. They both seemed properly affected, and thanked me, observing that I must have read my bible well; and to a good purpose to be able to make such prayers. "And now," said I, "don't you wish you had kept yours from the children?" "Indeed

master, I do," replied the woman, "and I would not have Humphrey Preach know it for a crown. I put the ragged leaves on the top shelf for fear he should spy them out one day, when he chanced to call." "Then perhaps you would take care of another," said I, "and if so, I can help you to a way of getting one; for these great folks you find so much fault with, have almost one and all agreed to send Bibles abroad and at home in every direction, and by that means the scripture prophecy will be fulfilled, that the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

"Do master then try to get us a new Bible," said she, "for we can both read a little. For my part," added she, turning to her husband, "I think we are much beholden to the gentlefolks for having us taught in their charity schools, and then clothing and putting us out in the world, and if they do make some mistakes in governing the nation, we should be the last to bewray them."

The Mason proved that he had for the present lost all interest in politics, for he was nodding in his seat, and with some difficulty was roused to shew me to my loft, the cleanliness of which was its only recommendation. I threw myself for the first time in my life upon a bed of straw, but I would not have exchanged feelings with the majority of those reclined on beds of down: for I had this evening

made an "essay to do good," and had reason to hope it would prove a successful one. After a long meditation on the character of Him who went about doing good, and thus encouraging his followers to imitate his example, I fell asleep; but was awaked early in the morning by the industrious pursuits of my host and hostess, the former taking possession of his sawing-box, and the latter rumbling about what I found afterwards to be washing-tubs. To these disturbing sounds, were soon added the softer ones of infant prattle, equally at war with repose, and I rose with the intention of reaching my own peaceful mansion by breakfast-time. Inclination, however, gave place to my further "essay to do good," for on my appearance the Stone-mason and his wife pressed me so earnestly to *mess* with them, that I judged they would suffer more words of exhortation. The *messes* provided for myself and the family consisted of well onioned broth and milk pottage. Seeing my portion like that allotted me the preceding evening diminish but slowly, the Mason observed I *messed* more like a gentleman than a poor working man, and began to enquire into the nature of my employments. As a reply to these enquiries must have proved embarrassing, and unedifying, I said, "Being in haste to depart now, he should know if I called again, and hoped he would have no objection to my reading another chapter." My hostess instantly handed me the tattered remains of the best of books, while the

three little ones opened their mouths and eyes in eager curiosity to see what I was going to do with it.

Happily there was one chapter escaped from their destructive pawings, more favourable to the doctrines I particularly wished to inculcate than almost any other : this was the second chapter of the first epistle of Peter. I read it with the strongest emphasis, on the five verses which treated of the duty of all Christians to obey rulers : this was observed by my hostess, who interrupted me by a remark to her husband. "There's no gain-saying that." "And mark," said I, "what follows, an exhortation to patience and humility, according to the example of our Divine Master." Then having finished the chapter, I observed, "this is addressed only to real believers, who are supposed by St. Peter to have come to Christ as to a living stone, by him as lively stones to be built up a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by him. How condescending is the Spirit of God, to explain in his word these glorious truths in such a familiar manner. In some places our Lord is represented as a *Shepherd*, in another as a *Vine*, nourishing his people, who are compared to the *branches*. Then he calls himself the *Door*, by which we must enter the kingdom of heaven. In another place he is called the *Tree of Life* whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. He is the *Rose of Sharon*,

more beautiful and fragrant than we can conceive. He is a *Sun* giving light and heat to his people; and a *Star* with milder beams reflecting on the dawning of the morning. In short there is scarcely any thing useful and beautiful with which we are acquainted, but our Lord in some sense or another is compared to it. Here he is likened to a *Stone*, and perhaps *you* may enter more into the sense of this comparison than I can."

I paused for the Stone-mason's reply, and was well pleased to see him apparently musing on the subject. "Why, master," he at length observed, "they may talk of one thing and another for a foundation, but there's nothing so good as a stone; and I would not trust myself on a weather-beaten spot in any house built on any other." "Then," replied I, "let us seek to be built up a spiritual house on this foundation. What is the first step to the preparation of a stone for building?" "Why to be sure," returned the Mason, "the first thing to be done is to dig it out of the quarry, but after that there's a *main* deal of trouble in rounding and fashioning of it before 'tis fit for use, and then the builder must take good heed to fit it to its proper place in the building, or the stone-cutter gets no credit." "I see then," returned I, "the comparison holds good every way; for our hearts are like these stones lying useless in a quarry, till sought out by him who has promised to turn our

hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. Then what pains does he take to mould and fashion our wayward dispositions, subduing our evil passions one after another, as the work-man strikes off the sharp edges of the stones; and after all, by his providence he places us in that part of his building which we are best qualified to fill. You and I then, my kind friends (rising to depart) have only to come daily by the prayer of faith to this sure foundation-stone laid in Sion, and when as lively stones we are made part of the glorious house, to abound in grateful praise to him who has called us out of the quarry of the sinful world, a state of darkness, into his marvellous light.

I put my hand into my pocket and drew out a few pence, but before I could offer them to my hostess, she laid hold of my arm, exclaiming, "Master put up your money, blessings on you. Don't never come this way without calling." The Mason shook me heartily by the hand, and seconded her invitation. I left their hospitable cottage with the hope of having dropped there a few hints, which I should through the medium of Humphrey Preach hear were rendered useful to them; and after calling at the Turk's-head to defray the small debt I had contracted, I pursued my solitary walk home, musing upon an important subject which will be submitted also to my readers' attention in my next chapter.

CHAP. X.

The true Patriot.

THE Apostle Paul, after using arguments to persuade the Christian converts at Rome to overlook small differences of opinion, respecting the observation of days, and abstaining from particular meats, lays down one truth as uncontroverted by all of them, "None of us liveth to himself."

This is the motto every Christian must adopt and act upon, and it is no question with him, shall I be public spirited? but how shall I best promote public good? The poor, the humble, and the diffident may not suppose themselves included in the list of benefactors to the world at large, but the fact is, every individual is more or less, a friend or an enemy to the nation to which he belongs. For as in a large machine every wheel and spring has its appointed place, from which it cannot be separated without injury to the whole, so do the rich and the poor, the wise and the simple, the

strong and the weak, the old and the young, meet together in the world, either by their happy union to the parts allotted them, to spread harmony or confusion in it. From this view of the subject, the Christian who laments his inability to aid his country by his counsel, may be satisfied that he is serving it by his orderly conversation; and while, as respects our depravity in the sight of God, we cannot think too meanly of our nature—we cannot think too highly of it, as placed in the scale of mutual dependence on each other. This is the only equality which Providence admits, an equal share in promoting the good of the whole; and this is the public spirit it is both an honour and duty to exhibit. Every peasant and labourer I met, seemed raised in my estimation by the reflection, that it lay in his power to spread the glory of the British name, for, says the Scripture, “Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” It is therefore the height of folly for any to boast of love to their king and country, who neglect to fulfil the duties of their own private stations, and vain will prove the attempts of the best and wisest ministers to advance our national interests, if they are not aided by a general disposition in all to maintain order, subordination and good morals.

The reader may suppose I lost no time in sending the promised Bible to the Mason’s cottage. I ac-

companied it with a church prayer-book, and another book of prayers adapted to private and family use. The zealous minded barber, as well as myself, being anxious to hear the proceedings of the club, soon visited the spot to make enquiries. On passing the church-yard, he perceived a funeral just arrived, and a number of mourners attending. Mourners they seemed only by name, for not a single countenance betrayed any symptom of grief. This proved to be the funeral of farmer Grumbleton, who fell ill of a fever, a few days after the accident of the fire, occasioned by his over exertions to extinguish it, and greatly increased by his intemperate habits of life. The few intervals of reason, which the violence of his disorder allowed, were employed in settling his worldly affairs, and to the surprise of all who knew the irreligious tenor of his conduct, he was insensible to any fears of the consequence. Some were ready on this occasion to be envious of the wicked, who have no bands in their death, but those persons did not consider, that the gift of an awakened conscience would have been the greatest blessing to the dying farmer, and its accompanying terrors far preferable to false peace.

This awful and unexpected breach made in their assembly, would probably have occasioned its dissolution if other causes had not. But the nurseryman, while assisting to extinguish the fire, had

his pockets picked of his political papers, which the disappointed thief found he could turn to no better an account than by an exposure of them to the magistrate, for which he obtained a small reward, and Mr. Spade a summons to give an account of them. As they were enclosed under a cover directed to himself, it was evident an accomplice was concerned, and the dread of some months imprisonment, prompted him to betray the seditiously disposed person, who in reality deserved more to suffer the rigour of the law; for his superior rank in life, education, and means of information, should have taught him the duties he owed his country. The miller thought deeply upon the hint thrown out by the nursery-man, on the expediency of destroying mills, to decrease the price of bread, and dreading the idea of the hint transpiring in public, resolved to avoid any interference for the future, in questions which might lead to observations on the high price of that article. The blacksmith seemed inclined to wait the return of the French gentlemen, in order to learn the full particulars of our national grievances, which he acknowledged he was at present ignorant of; since speaking by experience, he had never known better times for shoeing horses and blowing a forge. The wary justice, however, penetrated into the haunts of these ungrateful sowers of sedition, in a country where they had found unmerited kindness, and used proper means to silence them and destroy their schemes.

With the exception of the melancholy end of the farmer, Humphrey related these particulars to me with high satisfaction, and added, "but the best of all, Sir, is to come, for calling on my cousin, the Mason, I found him reading in the Bible you sent him, and willing to hear me talk about spiritual concerns, which he never used to be. He says too, that he is resolved to go to church, and keep away from public-houses. His wife told me that he seemed quite altered, ever since a poor old man, as she ignorantly called your honour, happened by chance to lodge at their cottage. Don't call it chance, said I, he was doubtless sent by Providence to do you both good, and you are rewarded for your hospitality, in being like Abraham of old, careful to entertain a stranger. He has done the work of an angel for you. I staid (continued Humphrey) a long while with them, and we talked a little of worldly matters, and strange as it may seem to you, Sir, I really thought that John's head was as light again as it used to be."

This discovery did not seem strange to me, for I had made correspondent observations on several persons of naturally weak understandings, after they had yielded themselves to the influence of that word, "the entrance of which giveth understanding to the simple." This effect is easily accounted for, since it is chiefly by a suitable exercise of the mental powers they become improved. If the

judgment, the memory, and the affections are suffered to lie unoccupied, or only directed towards trifling objects, they must continue weak, and 'tis no wonder that persons who never seek for wisdom, should mistake in their notions and conduct. Now let us briefly consider what the best of all books teaches us, and what subjects it holds up for our meditations. It teaches us, in the first place, to form a just view of our own characters. The Apostle James compares the word of God, that is the holy Scriptures, to a glass, in which every man may behold himself. And if he does not go his way forgetting what manner of man he is, this knowledge of himself will be of daily advantage, for it will produce humility, watchfulness, and tenderness of heart towards his sinful brethren. Next to the knowledge of ourselves, the most desirable is to know the consequences of our actions, whether good or bad as they affect our interests both here and hereafter.

The histories given us in the Bible of nations and individuals, convey in a rich abundance this useful knowledge. They warn, they encourage, or they teach by their examples, lessons which will never become old or of private interpretation: for however the face of the world or the manners of its inhabitants may change, the law of God, being founded on the immoveable basis of truth, must remain, and happiness or misery, attend the obedience, or neglect of it. To the instructions given

us from histories in the Scriptures, are added line upon line and precept upon precept, adapted to every possible condition of life. What prudence and worldly wisdom is taught in the book of Proverbs ! A due attention even to this single book, would ensure the person who studied it, the character of being wise. But the subjects which the Bible holds up for our meditations, respecting the being and perfections of God, the wonders of his power in the works of creation and Providence, and our interests in them, if duly considered, would enlarge our understandings more than all the advantages derived by the rich and great from their learned instructors.

And does the Bible contain all this instruction, of which the half has not been told by me ? then surely ignorance is inexcusable. The wisdom which comes from above is now every where offered to the poor, without money and without price ; and I indulge the pleasing hope, that all my readers are in possession of, or desirous to possess the invaluable treasure. But while I am pointing out to them the advantage they may derive from their knowledge of the Scriptures for worldly purposes, let me guard them from the sad error of studying them for no higher a purpose. It is to be feared that numbers have had their understandings enlightened, their minds enlarged, and even their conduct in many respects regulated by reading their Bibles, who yet

were never made by them "wise unto salva
This proves the sacred book to be only the *means*
conversion, not the *cause*, for such readers hav
lected to pray for the teachings of the Holy
to give his word success in writing upon the
the truths revealed to their understandings.

CHAP. XI.

The Reflecting Child.

FROM the earnest recommendation contained in my last to study the holy Scriptures, my readers may suppose me a warm advocate also for the instruction of youth, and that I am desirous of proving my allegiance to our present beloved sovereign, by aiding as much as possible the accomplishment of his expressed wish, "That every poor child in the kingdom should be taught to read the Bible." But when I assemble my numerous little flock around me in my office of Sunday-school teacher, I consider the importance of teaching to *think* as well as read, and of instilling *principles* for the guidance of their future lives. In my observations on the character of childhood, I find much to grieve, to surprize, and to please me. I am constrained to apply the humiliating declaration of Scripture—"Man is a transgressor from the womb, as soon as he is born he goeth astray speaking lies!"

Cruelty is bound up in the heart of a child, and the imagination of his heart is only evil, and that continually." Leaving the study of his heart, I examine his head, and here is subject for admiration as well as surprise. Before he is capable of expressing himself in plain language, he proves himself gifted with reason, genius, and a peculiar sort of art, which may almost be called judgment. On these three qualities the teacher may rely for success, in every impression he wishes to make on his understanding—the avenue at every age to the heart and affections. But what pleases me most in the character of childhood, and affords me the greatest hope of benefit from my instructions, is its simplicity, or that readiness of belief, which causes it never to dispute the truth of my arguments or assertions. From this well-known simplicity of childhood our Lord draws the important comparison—"Except ye receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter therein."

"What occasions that melancholy look?" questioned I to one of my young favourites one morning. He turned away his face to hide a tear ready to start from his eye. His brother answered for him. "Mother is very angry with him," said he, "because he would not say his prayers last night; and cried all day because a sparrow died that he was fond of." The little mourner hastily turned round,

and looking at me, exclaimed, "I could not say *thy will be done*, because of my poor bird." I took him by the hand, and pointing to his school-fellows, "mark this observation," said I, "from the youngest present, only six years old, for it explains the nature of prayer, which perhaps some of you are ignorant of. Many persons repeat words who never prayed in their lives. My dear boy, I am very glad to find you were afraid to say to God what you could not say truly from your heart, but you may beg of him to give you submission to his will. And you may try to forget the loss of your sparrow, and find another to supply his place, for that is what all wise persons do, when they lose one good thing, instead of fretting and vexing they consider how they can make up their loss in other ways." As each of my hearers looked as though they perfectly understood my meaning, I was encouraged to pursue the subject in nearly the following terms.

"The Lord's prayer is so plain that you find the youngest here can understand it, now let us think over the different parts. *Our Father which art in heaven*. You that have good fathers have great reason to be thankful, and 'tis your duty to honour and obey them; and if you feel as you ought, you will love them too: just so should you act towards your heavenly Father, for the first commandment is to love God with all our heart, and then to

reflect on the great love he shews for us, to condescend to look down from heaven upon us, and give us leave to call him *Our Father*. *Hallowed be thy name*. Now one would think no one would dare to take God's holy name in vain, yet how many wicked boys and men do so; but as the commandment says, "he will not hold him guiltless, who taketh his name in vain." To hallow or reverence the name of God, is also to respect every thing called by his name, that is, his church, his day, and his people. You have read how God punished those youths who mocked his prophet Elisha. It is wicked to mock any body's deformity, for all are made as it pleases God, and is neither the more or less to be respected by their fellow-creatures on account of their good or ill looks. But when any deride God's ministers, their wickedness is still more, as committed against God's ambassadors, as ministers are called, that is, his servants sent by him to teach his will, and instruct us in the way which leads to heaven. *Thy kingdom come*. Now, my dear children, you know that God is the great King of all the earth, being King of kings, and Lord of lords, so that in that sense, his kingdom is already come, for he cannot be made greater than he is. But you must understand that he has another kingdom, which is to last for ever and ever, and is called in the holy Scriptures the kingdom of grace and glory. Now all good people who love God and obey his laws, belong to this kingdom of

grace, and you must pray that their numbers may increase, and especially that you may be one of them, for if you are not, you can never belong to the kingdom of glory, which is laid up for the righteous after they are removed from this world.

“The next petition your little school-fellow has explained, and you will observe, that all the saints and angels in heaven obey the will of God, and if they did not, they could not be happy even in heaven, any more than disobedient and unholy people are upon earth. You know you do not feel happy, while you are wishing and doing contrary to the will of your parents and teachers, how much less can you expect to be so, while you are wishing and doing contrary to God's will, who like them will punish you for your obstinacy and disobedience, and that in a much severer manner than they can possibly do. Perhaps the petition *Give us this day our daily bread*, is felt by no one so strongly as by the number of poor persons, who rise in the morning without a certainty that they shall have sufficient food to support them through the day. This is a sad case, indeed, for the poor who are not Christians, but for those who are, there are promises that they shall have a supply of their daily wants, and this prayer which they are commanded to use may be called one, for God would not tell them to ask of him what he was not able or willing to give. Those who have enquired of

poor people, who are real Christians, how their wants have been supplied, have been frequently astonished at the wonderful interference of the good providence of God on their behalf. But the richest persons will find this petition suitable, for "riches make themselves wings and fly away," and sometimes those who have been high born are brought low; but even if this should not be the case, we need the blessing of God on our daily bread, since without that it would not nourish and strengthen our bodies, for the most wholesome food we eat might, if it pleased God to afflict us, be turned into unhealthy provision. And remember, my dear children, that you need not only a daily supply of food for your bodies, but also for your souls, for the grace of God must constantly be sought to renew the good dispositions he may have given you. Your having been good yesterday is no security that you will be so to-day, if you have neglected to ask for daily grace, most likely you will not. Therefore never forget your dependance for every supply on the bounty of your heavenly Father.

"In the next petition we are directed to ask for the forgiveness of our sins; and it is sad indeed to think, that there should be occasion every day to ask for it; but though you may hardly know what your daily offences are, God is so all-seeing that he knows them all, even the evil *thoughts* and *desires* of the heart. And you must observe, that while

you pray for your own forgiveness, you are instructed to forgive those who may have offended or injured you, and that too under a most awful condition, for only think what a sad case you must be in, if you harbour revengeful dispositions after asking of God that he would forgive you, as you have forgiven your enemy! O think upon this whenever you are angry, before you dare to repeat the Lord's prayer. *Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.* You are not to understand that God ever leads his creatures into temptation, for as the Apostle James says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." This petition then means to be kept from the power of temptation, and God will always give strength to resist and overcome all temptation to those who look to him and depend on his grace: but then remember those who do so, must also be careful to avoid the occasions, which may lead them into temptation, such as *bad company, improper places*, the harbouring *evil thoughts*, which must be the beginning of sinful actions. Our Saviour told his disciples to watch as well as pray, lest they entered into temptation. "And what I say unto you," said he, "I say unto all, *watch.*" The conclusion of the Lord's prayer is giving glory and praise to God, whose is *the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever*; and the saying, *Amen*, or so be

it, signifies that we are perfectly satisfied that he should have every possible praise, and that we desire to render it. Consider a little what reason there is for praising God. He made those wonderful bodies which we have, from whence so many enjoyments spring. Our active limbs which carry us from place to place. Our eyes to see the beautiful things around us, and our kind friends and companions; our ears to enjoy their company; and our tongues to make us agreeable to them in conversing together! then he has placed us in a part of the world, which is more highly favoured in its climate than many other parts. You have heard of earthquakes and tempests, and such intense heat and cold, as can hardly be borne by the inhabitants, how thankful should we be that we only hear of those things! But especially should we praise God for giving us souls to live for ever in happiness, if we do not neglect the care of them, and for giving us his holy word to instruct us *how* to take care of them. Then we are constantly indebted to his providence in keeping us from accidents and sicknesses; and when he sees fit to afflict us with any, he supports us under them, and blesses the means used for our recovery. Or he removes his people from their trials by taking them out of this world, and placing them in a better, where their praises begun here, will be perfected and last for ever.

“ Now I trust you feel in your hearts a desire to

praise God, but perhaps you may think he will not deign to accept praises from such little children as you. But you may read in his word, how children cried hosanna to their Lord and Saviour in the temple; and when the unbelieving priests and scribes were displeased with them for doing so, he rebuked *them* by asking them if they had never read in the psalms of David, 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.' Be sure then you can never be too young to sing the praises of God; and while you praise him with your lips, and try to feel and understand the words you say, remember there is a still better way of praising him, and that is by obeying his commandments, and doing your duty as your catechism expresses it, in that state of life into which it shall please God to place you."

While I addressed my young hearers in the foregoing terms, I attentively marked their countenances, to discover whether my words were intelligible to their understandings. I entertained little doubt of their being so, and they seemed to listen with pleasure. This observation induced me to pen down this simple address, as a specimen of the improvement which may be drawn from trifling occurrences.

Let the Sunday-School instructor then be encouraged to address his young charge as reasonable

beings, since it has pleased their Creator to form their intellects capable of the earliest improvement, and to allot no inferiority of mind to their inferiority of station, and after he has done his best, and committed his labour of love to the divine blessing, let him indulge in the delightful anticipation, that the Lord who hearkeneth to those his servants who speak often one to another, and think upon his name, will write them in the book of his remembrance, number them in the day when he maketh up his jewels, "and spare them as a man spareth his own son who serveth him."

CHAP. XII.

Memoir of a Friend.

On paying a visit lately to a lady of my acquaintance, I found her in tears, apparently occasioned by a letter which lay open on her table. She informed me it contained the intelligence of the death of a very dear friend, "Yet," added she, "when time has mollified the pang it has cost me, the fond remembrance which will remain, will be soothing, and I trust may be cherished without the smallest encroachment on the duty of resignation." "Most certainly," returned I, "and if your departed friend was of Christian principles, the feeling of nature is sanctioned by the word of God himself." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and the righteous, says the same word, shall be had in everlasting remembrance. "My friend," resumed the lady, "was truly beloved, respected and admired by all who knew her; though moving in a humble sphere of life, few persons ever obtained more influence." "In per-

sons capable of exciting such sentiments," returned I, "there may be supposed to reside qualities of peculiar virtue, and 'tis worth our while to enquire what they were, and how they were attained, since much of our usefulness in life depends upon the estimation in which we are held by those with whom we are immediately connected. It is of little consequence what rank such a person holds in society, the good of the whole being promoted by the virtue of a part, and every class influences its own circle. As you say your friend moved in a humble sphere, I, who am aiming to encourage my poor neighbours by pious examples, cannot but wish you would favour me with a memoir of her life, which I may communicate for their benefit." "Your proposal delights me," replied the lady, "it seems to soothe my own sorrow on the occasion, to know the memory of her departed excellence may be thus perpetuated, I will lose no time in gratifying your wish and my own feelings." In a few days the memoir was sent me which I shall present my reader in the lady's own words.

"My friend was the daughter of a respectable baker of the city of Bristol, and born in the year 1744. He died when she was very young, leaving one son and two daughters to the care of his widow, who by carrying on the business supported herself and children with equal respectability. She placed them at good day-schools, where the subject of this memoir possessing much quickness

of understanding, gained every possible advantage. Her youthful studies were of course soon over, domestic business succeeded, and all improvement in learning seemed impracticable: for although her mother had seen it proper to teach her children to read, she thought the practice of reading quite unnecessary. An aspiring intellect will break through the greatest impediments, and my friend contrived to borrow and peruse secretly a few books, which, added to an attentive observation of everything passing around her, formed her judgment to a height above her years. She attended with her family regularly at her parish church, and was early impressed by the sublimity of the prayers, &c. but this impression seemed merely the effect of taste, for a dislike to religion made her inattentive to the sermons which followed. This dislike was increased by the observations she was constrained to make on the temper of her mother, who professing to be religious took no pains in the management of one naturally very bad. Every day was embittered in some shape or other to her children from this circumstance; yet they witnessed her daily perusal of the Bible, and constant attendance at church: in fact, the whole of her religion consisted in these two particulars, and the effects to be produced by *reading* and *hearing* were never considered.

From the unpleasant effects of his mother's temper her son was removed, by being early

placed out in life at a distance from her; but, alas! the impression of the inefficacy of reading the Bible and attending church, which her conduct produced, was never effaced, and he lived to the age of fifty a despiser of religion, though a respectable and good moral character. Her eldest daughter died at the age of twenty. Though much afflicted at the death of her sister, the subject of this memoir experienced no serious impression from the event. She soon after attracted the notice of a young man, whose parents were of the baptist persuasion. His mind was seriously disposed, though perhaps his choice of a partner for life, whose character in this respect was so questionable, proved him less decided than he ought to have been. His zeal, however, was sufficiently strong to urge him to serious conversation with her, and from him she gained some information on religious topics. He avowed his attachment to the dissenting interest, and his expectation that his wife should accompany him to dissenting places of worship. To this my young friend made no objection, but when her mother was informed of the circumstance a total change took place in the affair; and strange as it will appear to the enlightened reader, who can love all those who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," of every sect and clime, this misguided and ill-judging parent opposed the connection on the ground of a difference in religion, thus mistaking the form for the essence.

The controversy ran high between the families, though the friends of the young man objected to the union only on the supposition that the young woman was possessed of *no* religion, and each party used their utmost influence to prevent its taking place. The friends and advisers on the female side prevailed. She believed from their representation, that the ground of difference was that of a true and false religion, and the argument used by Joshua—"Why halt you between two opinions?" continually repeated as applicable on the present occasion appeared to her conclusive. Another statement of the consequences likely to arise if she married a dissenter, gained still more on her imagination: she was told that if she died the wife of one, the church service would not be read over her grave, and that no bell would toll for her; added to these considerations, she possessed a high sense of the duty from children to parents, and a dread nearly bordering on superstition of the consequences of disobedience. The struggle of her mind was great, and being occasioned by these views of the subject, the resolution she took, was as amiable as it was uncommon. The young man quitted her with so deep a regret that it preyed on his constitution, naturally delicate, and he died of a decline about a year afterwards. Another year presented a new suitor to my friend in a young man of good connections, and flourishing business as a taylor: he also was educated in dissenting principles, but avowed

himself of no sect, seldom accompanied his parents to meeting, and assured the family he would attend the church of England in future. The bigotted mother now became as warm an advocate for this admirer, as she had been an opposer of the former, and her daughter could find no argument against the acceptance of him, but the consciousness that she did not feel the affection as she had done for her former lover. Had he been living the union would have been criminal, while to have yielded to the sentiment in the present case, would have been romantic. She married this person at the age of twenty, and happiness probably would have attended her, had he continued in the habits of sobriety and industry, which he had hitherto done: but she was now to prove the inefficacy of every principle, but that of true religion towards forming a correct moral character. While her husband lived under his father's roof, his temptations had been few, but now he was at liberty to form new acquaintance, and new habits. He kept to his word of deserting his seat at meeting, but he took no care to secure one at the parish church. Perhaps to the neglect of attendance on public worship, most immorality may be traced, while that form is retained, a sense of shame remains, and few are so hardened as to divide their time between the church and the resorts of vice. He was handsome in his person, agreeable in his manners, and sensible in his conversation. These qualities, added

to an ambitious spirit, led him to look out for, and to be acceptable to, a line of acquaintance above his rank. Among them he acquired a taste for card-playing, and became by degrees a lover of gaming. His business by neglect was soon wholly lost, and his poor suffering wife was under the necessity of throwing herself and an infant son on the maintenance of her mother, and beneath her roof, before she had been married three years. Her only consolation in this state of dependance arose from the consciousness that her mother, more than herself, was answerable for the evil. Hitherto her husband had behaved with personal kindness towards her, but now, under the pressure of conscious guilt, and disappointed hopes, his temper became morose and cruel. He seldom called to see her but to vent ill language, and quarrel with herself and mother, though he could view them in no other light than the innocent victims of his imprudences. To drown reflection he had recourse to drinking. In the mean while his amiable wife, almost sunk under the weight of her affliction, considerably heightened by the evil of her mother's bad temper, which this disappointment of her fondest hope had increased; she has often declared that she believed she should have died of grief but for her affection for her little son, who at the early age of five years displayed a disposition and understanding peculiarly engaging, and became the source of constant relaxation to her mind. The only source of solid con-

solation was as yet unknown; yet she wondered that she felt no influence from religion, while she professed to be religious. She heard from her parish rector much of the excellence of moral duties, but little of the foundation on which they ought to be erected, and nothing of the workings of the human mind in its different stages of conviction, repentance, anxieties, and hopes. Beginning to suspect there must be heights in religious experience to which she had not attained, she became curious of knowing what they were, and observing the multitudes which always followed the preachers of the methodists, the thought shot across her mind that it was strange such numbers should be deluded enthusiasts as she had heard them represented, especially as she saw many of her neighbours among them well educated, and of sensible deportment. With this impression she entered the Bristol tabernacle one evening. The apparent sincerity and affection of the minister as he prayed, struck her with much force; but when he gave out his text from the last verse of the 57th chapter of Isaiah, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," she imagined she had no concern in the subject, and only regretted her husband was not present. Intending to hear for him, and acquaint him with the truths to be delivered, she was extremely attentive. The preacher was equally faithful, and proved from scripture and daily observation, that all flesh had corrupted their ways,

and that none were righteous, no not one. He did not leave his hearers to despair from the knowledge of this humiliating truth, but affectionately directed their views to the Saviour of sinners. Though my friend during the whole of the discourse felt agitated with dissatisfaction, and was half disposed to disbelieve the representation, she found it impossible to escape from the serious thought it occasioned. She considered for the first time in her life the strong expressions contained in the church prayer-book she venerated so much, and was astonished at the unison she there discovered, with what she had heard from the preacher. Finding herself enlightened, she naturally hoped for comfort under the same style of preaching, and attended upon it with increasing satisfaction. She also formed acquaintance with a few of the congregation, who lent her books suited to her afflicted condition. Those written by the pious Mr. Newton were especially useful, and gratified her predilection towards her own church, as she ever called the Church of England. Though it had pleased God to enlighten her understanding by means of dissenting teachers, she never became, strictly speaking, a dissenter, or united herself to any sect in church fellowship. At this time she mourned that so few ministers of the establishment preached consistently with the creed they professed to believe, especially in her native city; but she lived to see a great reverse in this respect, though she could not avail herself of

the good she rejoiced in, on account of her not being able to bear at all times, the heat and fatigue of standing in such full congregations, as a faithful minister of the establishment usually attracts."

CHAP. XIII.

The Deserted Wife.

FROM the time when my friend received correct views of religious truth, her influence became great amongst her little circle. First an aunt was induced to enquire into the sentiments which could impart joy in the midst of grief, and was soon led to the same "Rock of ages." Her ignorant and bigotted mother, though delighted that any means had restored to her child her wonted vivacity and cheerfulness, of which she possessed naturally a large share, still remained the same, till afflicted by a severe illness. On the bed of sickness, not able to pursue her accustomed daily task of reading in the Bible, her daughter read to her, and thus obtained favourable opportunities to convey remarks. Hard indeed must be the parent's heart, which could have remained insensible to the dutiful attentions of such a daughter, and there is naturally a strong prejudice in favour of the opinions of those we tenderly

love. Her mother was induced at this season of retirement from the hurry of business to examine them, and before a candid examination the clouds of bigotry usually disperse. When she was sufficiently recovered to leave her house, she accompanied her daughter to public worship, and evinced by a wonderful change in her temper and general conversation, that she was now in possession of that faith which alone purifies the heart. She died about three years afterwards in a frame of Christian triumph, which my friend never mentioned without tears of wonder and gratitude. With her husband she had vice, not ignorance to combat, and here it did not please God to crown her endeavours with success. He became more depraved in heart, and more unkind in behaviour, till at length she was constrained from personal ill usage to take legal measures to gain a separation, and being bound over in a sum of money never to molest her further, he departed for a distant part of the kingdom, where he died in poverty, and it is to be feared in impenitence, about twenty years after his marriage. On the death of her mother, my friend, in union with a person who had long taken an active part in the management of the business, and to whom she now gave a share of it, prospered well in her worldly circumstances. She looked forward to the same means for the employment of her son, but when he attained his eighteenth year, he broke a blood-vessel, and the medical gentleman

who attended him, advised he should not follow the baking business. He had an inclination for the sea, and his mother with great reluctance suffered him to enter that line: one voyage, however, in which he nearly suffered shipwreck, induced him to change his inclinations. He had musical talents, and by those he gained a slender maintenance. But this line of employment led him into a circle of acquaintance, where he imbibed opinions opposite to those in which his pious mother had educated him, and a clear and vigorous intellect was exercised by him on subjects which tended to increase his sceptical turn of mind. He soon became a confirmed and avowed deist. Perhaps none but a Christian parent can fully sympathise in this part of my friend's afflictive story. It was the heaviest trial she ever experienced. How many sighs and tears have I witnessed on this account, and scarcely have I a letter in my possession which does not refer to the subject. The strong expressions it drew from her a few months before her death, I transcribe as a specimen. I have no doubt of the feelings of every pious mother so situated.

“ I have one favour to request of you, my dear friend, (and, oh, that you may be enabled to do it in faith) it is this, that you unite with me, and besiege as it were, the throne of grace on behalf of my dear son. To see him converted would be a

felicity beyond all expression. He is in the Lord's hands, and with him all things are possible."

A few years caused a reverse in my friend's worldly prosperity. The person with whom she was partner, and who was necessary to her in the management of the business, married, and set up in opposition. She was now about forty-two years of age; this person had resided with her for many years: he professed himself to be religious, and she entertained for him a most friendly regard. Many of her acquaintance were of opinion, that at her husband's death he had made her an offer of marriage, which she had accepted: if this was the case, it was a secret she never entrusted to me; she represented the wound given to her as a friend, to have been very deep; but at this period her spiritual consolations abounded more than at any other. Her Lord and Saviour seemed to be ever with her under the endearing character of a "brother born for adversity." Even her sleeping hours were occupied by ideas of him, and once particularly he appeared so plainly to the eye of her imagination, looking upon her with such an aspect of benignity, that the pleasing impression never forsook her mind, though from the fear of incurring a censure of enthusiasm, she seldom mentioned it. Doubtless this appearance was no other than a dream, and as dreams are frequently the result of ideas which engross the waking mind, it may very rationally

be accounted for. Possibly, however, the gracious Being, who ever has access to the soul, is pleased in this manner to convey his consoling influences under peculiar cases of affliction. When, in the confidence of friendly conversation, this pious woman related to me wonders in her Christian experience—such as the application of texts of scripture, instructions from the pulpit exactly suited to her case, and kind providences appearing in her favour, I have lamented how little I knew of such consolations, she would answer, “your blessings have been of a different nature. The Lord is a Sovereign; to some he gives an abundance of temporal prosperity, and to others spiritual, but seldom both together. If all have strength and consolation imparted equal to their day, all should be satisfied.”

Finding herself unequal to the management of her now declining business, she drew from it before it was too late to do it honourably, and endeavoured to find some other means of maintenance. She set up a day-school for a short time, but this was insufficient for her support: several other schemes were tried, till at length she was introduced into my family, as companion to a relation afflicted with fits. She was personally unknown, but the report of her being a methodist was to me, who was then young, and ignorant of scripture doctrines, particularly unacceptable, having asso-

ciated with the name all that was gloomy, morose, and fanatical. How was I surprised to find her the reverse of all this. She enlivened our family circle frequently by sallies of agreeable humour, and always by solid, sensible remarks. The uniform sweetness of her temper was admirable. Observing the pleasure she seemed to take in attendance at the parish church, I supposed the information given of her being a methodist false, and questioned her upon it. Her reply proved the liberality of her disposition, and I wish the sentiment was engraven on the heart of every professing Christian—"I call myself a member of the church of England, and I rejoice that in this place the pulpit and the reading desk are in unison, and I can therefore avail myself of the privilege: but I am a citizen of the religious world, and feel at home with every denomination, where Jesus Christ is held forth as the way, the truth and the life." To recite the words of an edifying nature, which fell from her lips in our various conversations, would fill many pages. They are deposited in my memory as precious memorials of her piety, and they are treasured up in that "book of remembrance, written for them who fearing the Lord, and thinking upon his name, speak often one to another."

We lived under the same roof together seven years, with a mutual increase of affection: when

my friend received an invitation to reside with an old acquaintance she had not seen for many years. Her husband was just dead, and had left her as she supposed in affluence sufficient to provide for her friend, in case she survived her. So flattering a proposal was not to be rejected, and my friend quitted my family though to our mutual regret.

From expressions which this person used in her letters, my friend had reason to hope she was at least religiously disposed, and having received a blessing on her influence in many instances, she indulged the hope of being made an instrument of good to her. But she was disappointed. She found her a different character to what she supposed her ; she was averse to all but the form of religion, and in her temper proud and jealous. Her circumstances too, were not so affluent as she imagined, and my friend naturally of an independent disposition, could not bear the idea of being in the smallest degree an incumbrance. She was now near sixty years of age, and subject throughout life to rheumatic disorders, which were increased upon her, consequently she was not qualified for a situation where much usefulness would be required. Providentially, as the widow of a taylor, she had a claim on an alms-house in her native city, and sufficient interest to procure an asylum there. On occasion of her success and settlement in this humble place, the style of her letters resembled

what might have been expected, had she been put into possession of an estate. Though she had no certain income beyond the house allowance of four shillings a week, and no friend in such independent circumstances as to ensure constant assistance, she was never harassed by a temptation to doubt a supply for the morrow. If from the kindness of friends she had more than she needed for immediate use, she would request them to keep it for her, lest she should spend money unnecessarily : thus proving her humility in judging of her own prudence and self command. Writing of herself she says, "I feel like one who having weathered a storm, is seated in a secure haven, only waiting the arrival of a vessel to convey him to his native country. My comforts and accommodations in this haven are great indeed. First, I have health to allow of a pretty constant attendance on public worship : I have good sight, and the loan of books, of which I grow fonder and fonder the older I grow. I have invitations to dinner more than I like to accept, from a fear perhaps groundless, or a pride reprehensible, of wearing out my welcome. How rich am I in friends : and it is worth while to be poor in pocket, as it gives me such opportunities of seeing the hand of providence stretched out on my behalf in so many instances. Then I have just as much household employment as I wish, in keeping my room in order, and every body to compliment me on my performances in this respect. To

crown all my catalogue of worldly good, my son is kind and attentive, and sufficiently employed to maintain himself."

On the closing scene of my friend's pilgrimage, I could have wished to have had it in my power to relate more. I could have wished to have caught a few sentences from the dying lips of such an exemplary Christian : but it pleased God to call her suddenly to the enjoyment of his immediate presence. She had been slightly indisposed for two or three days, but not so as to interrupt her usual delightful employment of reading. Her son saw her on the preceding evening, January 20th, 1813, engaged in perusing a commentary on the Bible, with which she expressed herself extremely pleased. She doubtless lay down to sleep with her mind sweetly occupied by the precious truths she had been considering, and was found in the morning quite lifeless. The mercy of this sudden dismissal to one in her poverty of condition was great, and it appeared more conspicuous in about a month afterwards, when it pleased God to remove her son, whose health had long been in a declining state. Thus sparing her from suffering the greatest affliction she could possibly have experienced.

It would be gratifying to my feelings to dwell on the several useful and agreeable qualities exhibited in the character of this pious woman ; but an im-

provement of her history will be more edifying to my readers. Three reflections are obvious. First, That Christians need not dread afflictions. Few are called to greater trials than those I have briefly related in her case: yet her supports were always equal to her need, and she rejoiced in the opportunity they afforded her of knowing more of the heights and depths of Christian experience, than can never be attained by those less afflicted. Secondly, the influence she acquired, though in humble life, is encouraging, and should animate all to become preachers of righteousness in their circle. Though it must be confessed all Christians do not possess her advantages of superior judgment, and quickness of understanding, yet all may acquire her depth of knowledge in divine truth, if they make their Bibles their daily study: and if, in dependance on the promised teaching of the Holy Spirit, they impart their religious knowledge to their ignorant companions, they may indulge the hope of being like her, numbered with those, who having been made the honoured instrument of turning many to righteousness, shall shine as "lights in the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

Lastly, the pleasure we enjoy from our social intercourse with earthly friends, may give us some faint but animating views of those pleasures reserved for the "spirits of just men made perfect." From the necessary distinctions of rank in this

world, access to eminently wise and great characters is denied to the poor and ignorant, but in heaven the rich and the poor will literally meet together.

We shall then be surrounded by all the excellent, "of whom the world was not worthy." Whom, though unknown we love, and by whose pious examples or instructions we have been edified. Instead of selfishly mourning, let us rejoice in the removal of our Christian friends to such society, and let the heart-cheering reflection stimulate us to press forward towards the mark for the prize of our high calling ; even the glorious hope of dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God."

CHAP. XIV.

History of Mary Smith and Elizabeth Brown.

WHEN Humphrey Preach is to be the relater of any history or adventure, I presume few of my readers would wish me to substitute my own words or ideas, but I doubt whether they would equally approve of the style adopted by most of my humble acquaintances, which being generally so overloaded with "says I, says he, so, as I was saying," and especially an abundance of matter, which bears no connection with the story they are telling, as would certainly call forth more exertion of patience than I have a right to demand. This being the case, I will relate a little history in my own manner, which I learnt from the shoe-maker's wife, respectable mother of the deformed girl, I saw at the workhouse.

Elizabeth Brown and Mary Smith were born in the same month, and under similar circumstances:

for both were orphans before they reached their fifth year ; and, from the poverty of their deceased parents, were thrown upon the charitable care of the parish, which provided them a home in the workhouse. Here their agreeable manners attracted the notice of a few benevolent visitors, who kindly sent them to one of their charity-schools. It was soon discovered by their teachers, that they were possessed of good understandings, and the progress they made in their learning by exciting admiration, increased the number of their friends, and opened the way for their advancement in life. At the age of sixteen, an elderly lady took Elizabeth Brown into her service, and Mary Smith on the same day was preferred as assistant nursery-maid in the family of the minister of the parish. Living together as sisters ever since they were capable of recollection, they felt painful emotions at parting, but the thought of independence, and the consolation of frequently seeing each other, easily reconciled them to the event. I have mentioned that both these young women were blessed with good understandings, but their abilities and turn of mind varied greatly. Elizabeth was lively in her disposition, and hasty in all her words and actions. She was impatient of contradiction, and of a high spirit, which infused a sort of pertness into her manners, by no means becoming her humble station. While Mary was mild and gentle, spoke little, but pondered over in her mind what was

spoken by others. It may be supposed the two friends were anxious to meet, in order to compare their places together, and enquire into their likings or dislikings of their new situations; but Mary was content to wait her mistress's permission for calling on Elizabeth, who in the mean while dispatched two or three letters to her, in which she spoke of her mistress as being very cross, and difficult to please, expressed her surprise that one, who could not see a word in any book without spectacles, should discover every particle of dust left by accident on her furniture; ridiculed the exact order in which she chose her house to be kept, and deeply lamented the prohibition she daily received against looking out of the window. Elizabeth was much hurt that Mary made no reply to her letters, and reproached her for the neglect: but Mary said, if she had done so, she must have neglected her business, which was sufficient to occupy all her time, excepting what she wanted to keep her clothes in repair. "I shall, (replied Elizabeth) wear mine out as soon as possible, in order to buy smarter ones, and as my mistress does half the work in the small house herself, I shall find plenty of time for writing. What was the use of our learning to write, if we make no use of it. I have heard of poor girls making their fortunes in the world by their writing."

Now you speak of that (returned Mary) I recol-

lect while I was waiting at tea the other day, master was telling of a poor milk-woman once, who was made a lady of by writing verses, but you can't write verses."

"I don't know that, (said Elizabeth) I think I could make verses on my old mistress and her queer ways." Elizabeth lost no time in beginning her task, and it must be confessed, the lady had a few peculiarities of humour and habits which gave some scope for the display of ridicule. Mary was so much pleased with her friend's performance, that she shewed it to one of her young ladies, who shewed it again to her mamma. She made enquiry respecting the writer, and desired to see her the first convenient opportunity she could leave home. This was soon found, and Elizabeth appeared before Mrs. Goodall with no small degree of assurance, being animated by Mary's hopes and her own conceit. But how were these flattering prospects changed, when Mrs. Goodall thus addressed her—"I have sent for you, Betty, not to praise your verses, for they have no kind of merit. If their subject was good, I could readily excuse their want of genius, but really I am ashamed of you, to think that after the instruction you have received, you should not know your duty as a servant better. Your mistress should be respected, as well as obeyed, and your time is her's, to be spent in doing your daily work, not wasted upon

turning her into ridicule with your pen. The kind friends who taught you to write, never suspected you would thus abuse a knowledge, which you may if you please convert into usefulness ; for by means of it, you may one day or other become an upper servant in a family, and in the mean time you may by your mistress's leave, improve your mind, and keep up your hand-writing, by making memorandums of what you hear at church." Elizabeth, with a crimson glow upon her cheek, knew not what to answer ; she stammered out something about being fond of reading verses, and having heard of poor people's making them, and being called geniuses. " If you are fond of reading verses," replied Mrs. Goodall, " I will give you a hymn-book, and if you can make verses as good as you find there, bring them to me, and I shall discover what your genius may be. But indeed, Betty, I recommend you to direct all your powers of mind as well as body to the duties of your station."

Elizabeth left Mrs. Goodall vexed and disappointed, and instead of looking into the hymn-book for pleasure and instruction, she exchanged it in her way home, with a ballad singer she met, for a ridiculous song-book, who discovered the value of its binding to be more than the whole contents of her basket. Her mistress looked displeased, and holding in her hand the rough copy of the verses which Elizabeth had carelessly left in the

kitchen, severely reprimanded her for her ill-directed wit, as she mistakingly supposed it. Had she made an humble acknowledgment of her error, and promised never to repeat it, her mistress would readily have forgiven her, but she made a pert answer, and in consequence received warning to quit her service. The next place she undertook was nursery-maid, where several other servants were kept: from them she learnt many improper sentiments, and many more from reading foolish books which they had in their possession. Thus the ill direction of a taste for reading, which in itself is praise-worthy and desirable, became injurious to her. She often took one of these books with her when she went out with the children, and instead of diverting them and leading them into healthy exercise, would sit reading with the little infant in her lap, while the elder little ones would play on the dangerous bank, or lie on the damp grass. These inattentions being soon discovered, she was disgracefully dismissed from this service. She next went to wait on a young lady of large fortune, who happened to see her with the children, and took a liking to her appearance, which was very prepossessing. Here she might have continued, and lived in the utmost ease and respectability, but she grew now extravagantly fond of dress, and foolishly imagined that the finery which became her young mistress, was suitable to her. She therefore copied the make of her dresses, and spent most of her wages in un-

necessary ornaments. Her inconsiderate young mistress neglected to reprove her for this conduct, till at length she grew so bold as even to wear some articles of her dress on a visit she paid to an acquaintance. This liberty was discovered and justly resented. She was ordered to quit her service immediately, and given little reason to hope for a character to procure another. Elizabeth would now have suffered great uneasiness but for the circumstance of her having gained the regard of a young shoe-maker in the neighbourhood, whom she resolved to marry, and thus free herself from servitude of any kind. It happened rather unfortunately, that the young man had not actually declared his intentions, but Elizabeth made no doubt he would, the first favourable opportunity. It was a custom adopted by Mr. Goodall, the clergyman of the parish, on the first of May to preach a sermon to young persons; and as she knew John would go to church, Elizabeth planned to go also, and trusted that on their walk back together, the wished-for explanation would take place. Some time previous was spent in preparing new finery, and her last shilling was laid out in the purchase of a smart black feather to decorate her bonnet. Tricked out in her new attire, she watched for John from the little window of a cottage, where a kind hearted acquaintance had given her a lodging until she could find another service, and took care to step out at the instant he passed. During their walk to church she gave a plausible reason for her

sudden departure from her late place, for she had lost all regard to truth, and had long accustomed herself to represent circumstances just as was most convenient to her occasions. John listened with attention to her discourse, but said little in reply: she was however well pleased to observe he often cast an eye on her dress; and as the brisk air waved about her new feather, she could have no doubt of its meeting his notice. She was unusually gay, for she had been told that her lively manners had been often praised by John, and that most men chose partners with opposite dispositions to themselves, for John was a grave, thoughtful young man.

CHAP. XV.

*The History of Mary Smith and Elizabeth Brown,
continued.*

As they came in sight of the church, John reminded Elizabeth of the place they were going to, and that it was best to shut up all this idle talk, for that, for his part he found he could not forget in a minute any nonsense he might be hearing just before he got into church. Though the observation bore some reflection on Elizabeth's discourse, she would not seem offended, but acquiesced in the serious idea, and entered the church-doors with a grave and becoming deportment. They separated as usual, Elizabeth taking her seat with other female servants, and John on the opposite side. On this occasion she thought herself peculiarly fortunate, as she was close by the side of Mary Smith, whose person, as well as dress, presented in her opinion a contrast much in her own favour. Thus did her vanity obtain the conquest over her feelings of friendship.

The subject Mr. Goodall had chosen for the occasion, was the joyful expectation of our Lord and Saviour's appearance from heaven to change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his own glorious body. He was naturally led to consider the various reasons why our bodies, though so curiously wrought, as clearly to prove the wisdom and skill of an Almighty Maker, were notwithstanding to be accounted *vile*;—As they were formed of the most perishable materials, even the dust of the earth, as they were the subjects of innumerable diseases, and at last of death. He dwelt too on the increase of vileness man himself had imposed on his mortal body, by rendering it the habitation of sin; for though formed of dust, and therefore most probably not designed to continue for ever exactly in his original state, disease and death would have been unknown had man not sinned. The practical improvement the pious minister made of the subject, was to represent the extreme folly of caring for this vile body so much as was generally done, of seeking gratifications for that, to the neglect, if not to the injury of the immortal soul; and the support which the sincere Christian might draw under all his diseases and infirmities in the expected change; ending with a faithful address more particularly to the young and vain part of his congregation.

John and Elizabeth again met at the conclusion of the service, when, as nearly as I can recollect

from my informant, the following dialogue took place :

John—"Well, this to my thinking was a fine sermon, though to be sure it put one out of conceit with one's self, that is, with one's own beauty; for my part I always did think it nonsense to dress out as many do; and I thought while our parson was saying all that about dress, you must feel ashamed of that *fly-flapper* o' top of your head."

Elizabeth—"I am not ashamed of good clothes; I come honestly by them; and *win gold and wear it*, is said by people as wise as parson Goodall. I did not like the sermon much, but you are a better judge of sermons than I am, only some part of it was so dismal, 'twas just like opening the graves in the church-yard."

John—" 'Tis nothing to the purpose whether we like the sermons or not, but if they are according to the Bible, we ought to pray and strive to like them, and do accordingly. But I wanted to find a time, Betty, just to speak a bit about your dressing out: for do you know what the folks say?"

Elizabeth—"People will talk about what don't concern them. Nobody dare say I come dishonestly by my clothes, or sure if they do, you won't believe them."

John—"I should be sorry to believe such a thing of you, though 'tis generally thought so of all you dress-out girls. However, all I have heard said about you, amounts to no more than a suspicion, that you are all rags out of sight, and a sneer—" 'There goes Bet Brown, who came out of the workhouse the other day, and is now dressing out for a husband.' Now this is grating to the ears of any body who has a regard for you."

Elizabeth—"It is a shame for them to rip up my being in the workhouse. How could I help that?"

John—"They would not if you did not cut such a dash, and seem to carry yourself so high. But you know 'tis natural enough when we see folks proud and fine, to ask—"who are they? or where did they spring from?" or the like. There's Mary Smith may walk from one end of the town to the other, in her close bonnet and plain gown, and nobody even think, much less talk about her coming out of the workhouse. Then her living all this time in one place makes her respected, and supposed to be good for something."

Elizabeth—"I could have lived in one place too, if I had chosen; but I like to see the world."

John—"But mind the old saying, 'a rolling stone gathers no moss.' When you are out of

place, if 'tis for ever so short a time, you must be on the spend, and besides, get no chance of having your wages raised, which mistresses will often do for steady servants, if they live a good while. I suppose you know that Mary's were raised last year."

Elizabeth—"Mary has a right to please herself, and I have a right to please myself."

As she spoke the sentence, her colour heightened, and she doubtless felt a jealous emotion. Her agitation occasioned her to take less heed to her steps. The road was dirty, and she too fashionable to avail herself of the convenience of a pair of pattens to carry her safely over. She stepped on a clayey spot, where leaving her shoe behind her, she exhibited to the eyes of John a half naked foot. Thus proving the truth of her neighbour's suspicions.

John assisted in the recovery of the deep sunk shoe, but though they were in sight of the stile which he was always accustomed to see Elizabeth safely over, he now chose to strike into a path close by, which led a nearer way to his own habitation. He thrust both hands into his waistcoat-pockets, instead of extending them to his companion in the friendly act of parting; and with a faltering voice exclaimed, "good bye, Betty, remember, a rolling stone gathers no moss."

John's words and actions conveyed fully the effect this accident had communicated to his mind. The following Sunday confirmed to Elizabeth her suspicions, that the modest plain-dressing Mary was likely to rival her in his affections, for she had the mortification of seeing him waiting to speak to her at the church-yard gate, and receiving only a stiff nod herself as she passed him. Pride and anger now induced her to take a step most absurd and ruinous, for resolving to appear indifferent, where she was in truth much disappointed, she threw herself away in marriage to a smart footman, who deserted her in a few weeks, and left the neighbourhood with another woman, to whom he had been legally married before. As Elizabeth's case seemed, on account of her youth and inexperience, to demand some commiseration, several benevolent ladies came forward, and amply supplied her wants on the birth of her child I saw in the poorhouse. They employed, or rather wished to employ her in needle-work, and the instruction of young children, but the unhappy woman rejected every friendly assistance, and plunged herself into remediless evils. Idleness and dissipation took full possession of her mind, and deprived her of the natural affection due to her own child, for rather than take the trouble of carrying it with her to the wakes and fairs she always attended, she intrusted it to the care of some young girl, and on one of these occasions, the infant re-

ceived a fatal injury by a fall, which rendered it the sad deformed object I saw; and laid the foundation of its early dissolution.

The depraved company Elizabeth fell in with at these places, soon completed the utter ruin of her morals, and she became a miserable object of poverty and wretchedness: she could procure no better employment than working in brick-fields, where, habited in a ragged man's coat, and covered with dust, she was seldom recollected by her former acquaintances. Her lodging was in a miserable hovel with some others, near a river; into which on her way, on a dark evening, she fell. Being soon extricated by her companions, she would by the humane exertions of a neighbouring physician probably have been recovered, had not the spark of life been extinguished, occasioned by her being intoxicated at the time; a circumstance which generally renders a few minutes' immersion fatal to life.

The above little history is not presented to my readers as containing any thing extraordinary, but only worthy of their attention; as presenting a faithful picture of the natural consequences of the line of conduct pursued by the ill-judging Elizabeth. The kind providence of God seldom permits all the evils to which our imprudent and sinful conduct leads; but while this mercy excites gratitude,

let it never encourage presumption : and let the awful reflection that there is a day of retribution, awaken a holy fear of sinning against a sin-avenging God. When deserved judgments of a temporal kind are inflicted upon particular individuals, persons are apt to question with the disciples of old, 'were these greater sinners than others?' Our Lord's answer reproved harsh judgment, and taught the necessity of repentance—"I tell you, nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

My young female readers, I urge you particularly to the work of self-examination, on the perusal of the sad history of Elizabeth, because I am certain the dispositions she possessed, are commonly to be found amongst you. You have seen the abuse she made of that learning, which has probably, been bestowed upon you by your kind friends, with the same intention as it was bestowed upon her, to render her more capable of knowing her duty to God and man; of contributing to form a greater share of happiness to herself, (for in proportion as the understanding is well-informed, mental pleasures are increased) and usefulness in the world. You have seen in her case, how a love of dress united to a roving disposition, which defeated the very end she had in view of procuring money to support her extravagance, lost her the affections of a sober tradesman, who wisely chose for a partner in life, the modest-dressing, retired

Mary Smith, the narrator to me of this story: And you have seen the fatal effects which are produced by a love of vain company. If you are faithful in the work of self-examination, I think you will discover a proneness more or less to these dispositions; but you will resolve to indulge them in greater moderation, and flatter yourselves you may always say to them, "hitherto ye shall go, and no further." This is the dangerous rock on which numbers suffer shipwreck. The passions have been compared to the sails of a vessel, they are absolutely necessary to its use; but as they are skillfully directed or not, they lead to the desired haven, or sink it in the quick-sand. It is religion only that can teach you the art of governing and directing your affections, and as you attend to its influence, will be your happiness in life, your peace in death, and your destination to joy or woe in eternity.

CHAP. XVI.

Walk and Conversation with Mr. Peach.

As I set out this morning on my walk, uncertain what course of observation to pursue, I cast my eye behind me, and discovered Mr. Peach advancing in a kind of pace between a walk and a run, by which he cleared so much ground that he overtook me in a few moments. "Really," said I, "you might be mistaken for one of our modern pedestrians; I suppose you have hasty business to transact this morning." "By no means, Sir," returned Mr. P. "this is my usual pace, and I have found my account in aiming at speed in all my business. Gentlemen like those trades-people best, who use dispatch. 'Tis well-known in these parts, that if any gentleman will be certain of being dressed to the time for a coach, a visit, or any other engagement, he must send for me." Being assured by Humphrey, that no such engagement urged him on at present, I requested him to slacken his pace,

that we might enter upon a little conversation, to which he readily assented, after observing that it was a great proof of Christian humility in a gentleman to be willing to walk side by side with a poor man, on a public road, and that he hoped he should always know his *own* place, though the gentlefolks did favour him with so much notice. He then resumed the subject of his fast walking. "This ability given to my limbs," said he, "led me into temptation some years back: for two dashing young gentlemen from London came into the neighbourhood, and took it into their heads they should like to lay wagers on my walking. They proposed a distance and time, which, I inadvertently said, I was pretty certain I could accomplish. They put a twenty pound note into my hands, and concluded I suppose I should set out directly. But I was not to be caught in a moment neither. I returned them the note, but promised to consider the matter. Now here was my error, we should *never parley with temptation*. My conscience made honest, I trust, by the grace of God, instantly said, this is gambling: they ask you to encourage. Well, Sir, in consequence of not resisting the devil immediately, he would not fly from me, but followed me home; and like as it happened to holy Job, he was permitted to try my virtue by means of my wife. She, good soul, as she is in the main, had her eyes full of the golden dust, and talked of our want of this to 'prentice out our biggest boy.

Then, says she, you perhaps may be given more the next time you walk; and for what I know, it may be better for your health than sitting so much as you do to wig-making; (I sat more then, because there was more necessity for me to work hard when I had young children about me: now I pick and choose my customers, so have fewer) as well as more profitable, and besides you will be known to the London gentry, and mayhap may be set up in business there by some of them. Thus she went on, and I heard her talk very well pleased. But my all-gracious Lord did not quite withdraw the motions of his good Spirit: Aye, if he was ready to do this, what would become of the poor tempted believer! When night came, and the hour for reading the Bible, I was roused; and as I took it off the shelf, I was enabled to reprove her for her idle talk, saying, "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not agreeably to your words, there is no truth in them." Now I am convinced from that evening's experience, there is no weapon so good to combat Satan with, as God's word. Indeed I might have known that, by attending to the account given of our Lord's temptation. He said to him, "It is written." Good Mr. Bunyan too, directs his Pilgrim to this rule; but some-how or other, we are not deeply impressed with these things, till we prove them for ourselves. It had always been such a favourite chapter with me, (as I believe it is with most poor Christians) that from

being so often read, my Bible generally opened on the sixth chapter of St. Matthew. I read it, and my wife as well as I, was beat off by it from all our worldly-carefulness. We could then recollect plenty of texts, such as "Be ye not partakers of other men's sins:" "Abstain from all appearance of evil:" "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

The next day I plainly told the gentlemen the state of the case, and how it was impossible for a Christian man to encourage any sort of gaming. I warned them too, in the most respectful manner I could, against indulging in the sin themselves. They went away laughing, but I do not despair but what I might thus in sincerity speak, might one day or other be remembered by them. Where such an opportunity occurs for reproof, I think none should suffer sin on their brother: and, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days," is an encouraging text. A peculiar blessing followed our resisting thus in the strength of God's word this temptation, for a few weeks after, I was offered by a pious man in the next town, the advantage of taking my son without a 'prentice fee,—a thing one never hears of scarcely; tho' were I to choose, I would rather take such a sober lad as Tom without money, than most of the boys as they go, with. His master *never repented his generosity;—and Tom is now*

set up for himself, and thrives *mainly*. But I ought to ask pardon, Sir, for thus running on about my own affairs. The older I grow, the more I get like my good old father, who loved to tell a long story to his heart."

"Mr. Peach," returned I, "if I had not wished for your conversation, I should not have invited you into my company, so make no apology. Your pockets, I perceive, are stuck out with papers; and I suspect some tale is attached to the circumstance, which would not discredit you, if you are willing to communicate it."

"My papers are no secrets, Sir," replied Humphrey: "You'll see me stop at every public-house we pass to leave some, till my pockets are empty; for I am now going my monthly rounds."

"I regret," said I, "to observe an unusual number of such houses in this neighbourhood: Do you know how it happens there are so many more than are necessary?" "Alas," returned Humphrey, "this is a matter of regret to every thinking body round; but you must know, Sir, that the estate belongs to an *unthinking* Duke, who grants licences to any one who asks him; and tho' the evil has been stated to him by our good Rector and the heads of the parish, he gives no heed, for he says, 'tis only the Methodists out-cry against a poe

man's enjoying a little comfort during his short life. Aye, *seeing's believing*; how I wish his Grace could see these poor creatures staggering home, after spending half their wages; and hear, as I do, the bitter lamentations of their poor deserted wives and ragged half starved children. Then the quarrels and swearing amongst them are dreadful to the ears of all, be they Methodists or not. Well, finding nothing could be done with the Duke, our Rector bent all his aim at trying to reform the men themselves; and a blessing rests on his endeavours, for one and another is always coming round to the week-day lecture: and I observe, as soon as ever they are constant there, the work of reformation is done as respects going to public-houses. He also got together a number of religious tracts, and gave round to the public-house keepers, to lay in their tap-room and about. But here he was not so successful, for to my certain knowledge they put most of them into the fire, because like the Ephesians of old, "Their craft was in danger" from such readings. I made bold to tell him, I thought it would be so; I know public-house keepers' minds better than Mr. Goodall. Well, thought I, if one way wont do, we must try another; so I wrote up to an acquaintance I have in London, to send me a great quantity of sessions' papers, and putting them under my arm, I sallied forth, and looked in at the houses. Every landlord I saw set his eye upon my papers, and asked what they were: being told they

asked for a sight of them, as trials were very entertaining reading. To be sure they are, replied I, and mayhap some of your customers may like to look at them; and they save you the expence of newspapers. Well, cried old Thrifty of the Bear, that's a good thought, I suppose you get these things cheap. Dog cheap, replied I, for I resolved cheap as I got them, he should have them still cheaper. Delighted that my bait had taken, I left a parcel with him, and the rest of them, who not dreaming there was any thing to be learnt from them to endanger their craft, agreed to buy them at a low rate whenever I chose, ~~to entertain their~~ customers, and sometimes to save their newspapers. Thus we have gone on month after month, and I expect to hear of some good being done. I select only those I think profitable; and I am sure, if any one disbelieves the doctrine of an over-ruling Providence in bringing to light and punishment (often in the most wonderful way) the hidden works of wickedness, he ought to read sessions' papers. If any one doubts the hardening nature of sin; and the possibility that by an indulgence even of one evil temper, persons may be brought to commit the greatest crimes, he has only to look into the sessions' papers. And if any suppose the most cunningly devised schemes can always deceive justice, he has only to see the end of them, as they are shewn in the sessions' papers. Then, 'tis very profitable to read of the distress of mind

the poor criminals endure ; and sometimes they speak to the purpose at the gallows, warning their hearers against following their examples, in such a manner, as leads one to hope the grace of God has touched their own hearts to a saving end : Some of the Judges too, say good things ;—and I hope it will be impressed more and more on their minds, to exhort on these awful occasions."

We were now arrived at the first public-house, which Humphrey entered,—and I walked on in the expectation of his speedily overtaking me. He staid longer there than he wished, as he told me, being obliged to discourse a little with the landlord, who was the most profligate of all. "When I went in," said Humphrey, "he was sitting in the tap-room. Ah ! Master Preach, he cried, what more of your next-kin to godly books ? I believe I shall take no more of them ; while my customers are reading they can't be singing ; and I always loves to encourage a merry noise, because they on the outside are more likely to turn in if they hear it. There's something in that, Master Jolly, to be sure, replied I, but take both sides of the argument. Now you'll allow that wickedness ought to have its bounds, and you don't wish to see your neighbours in prison, or at the gallows. No, no, replied he, they would then be lost to the tap. Just so, I returned, here then will be more policy in you to keep them away, than to run the hazard of

losing your old customers, on the speculation of getting a few new ones,—for depend upon it, singing loose songs is as ready a way to bring your young men to the gallows, as Satan could ever devise. But I'm half *afear'd*, returned the landlord, that these half-godly books will hazard me the loss of a customer ; for the other day Jack Sage looked mighty *dumpy* while he was reading ; and said something about God's mercy in keeping him from wicked ways, to the one who sat next to him. Being at a loss (continued Mr. P.) to parry off this fear of the landlord, which I thought so well founded, I had nothing left to have recourse to but my own consequence ; so gathering my papers together, Well, neighbour Jolly, said I, as you have so many fears, I suppose I am not to be obliged in this matter, for you know I don't disguise that my motive in the circulation of these papers, is to mend the morals of their readers ;—and I don't scruple to say, I am obliged to all who will take them even as a gift, if they can't conveniently buy. This had the desired effect. He said, he was to be sure glad to oblige me, and desired me to leave what I liked. You see, Sir, my business leads me into the presence of all the gentlefolks round, and these chaps know, how they let me speak freely ; and that I may, if I please, serve them twenty ways : so the world goes—interest carries all."

I congratulated Mr. Peach on the talent of influence he possessed, and his happy art of management in its application : when arriving at an old mansion-house, empty, with a porch delightfully situated for a sight of the country, I told Mr. P. I should seat myself in it, possibly till his return, if his rounds were not very extensive. He said most probably he should be back in an hour, as he should now resume his usual pace ; and added, 'tis not every one would sit alone in that porch, for 'tis generally believed hereabout, that the old house is haunted : and truly I think too, there is good ground for the report. I just mention this, in case you, Sir, dislike such places. I assured Mr. Peach, his intelligence would make no alteration in my intention of awaiting on this spot his return ; when I should solicit information from him, respecting the *good ground*, as he supposed, the report rested upon.

CHAP. XVII.

The Haunted House.

As soon as Mr. Peach returned to the haunted house, where I had continued the appointed hour without experiencing any alarm, I requested him to favor me with the history of the ghost, supposed to visit this venerable looking mansion. "I knew nothing of him, Sir," replied Humphrey, "but as I heard the story from a good old man, his servant, so you shall have it from me, and judge for yourself. This house with a large estate belonging, was inhabited by a very worthy gentleman, his wife and three daughters. He had one son, the grief of his heart, for he early took to wicked courses, insomuch that his father was forced to send him away to a distant part of the kingdom; for he had even threatened his life. When the old gentleman died, this young man being heir to the estate, came immediately and took possession of the mansion, and turned out his mother and sisters,

and all the servants, except the one (Nicholas Ridman) the good old man I knew. He would have turned him off too, but he was much in his late father's confidence, and knew money concerns relating to the estate, so that his presence was almost necessary. The step he took after the possession of his inheritance, was to send for many of his wicked companions to make merry, and a grand entertainment was prepared against the day of their arrival. Nicholas Ridman waited on them at dinner; but, as he told me, he secretly resolved, that as it was the first, so it should be the last time he would ever wait on a set of reprobates. He said his very blood chilled, when he recollected the profane shocking words he heard from them, and the ridicule they made of his late good master, whom he loved, as though he had been his own father: he seemed to be before his eyes all the day, as witnessing the scenes which were passing. Well, night came, and the party were all nearly intoxicated. Supper was set out; and they seated themselves at the table, the master of course at the head. He had taken his knife and fork in his hand, when his eye seemingly was caught by something he saw at the door of the room, which stood open opposite him, and lead into a large hall. Nicholas had his back towards it, but on seeing his young master look, he turned to look also, and assured me, he verily thought he saw his old one standing there, but before he could be quite sure, he was

gone. Nicholas and all the rest were now engaged in attention to the young gentleman, whose eye was still fixed on the door, wholly regardless of all the enquiries made by the company ; till in a few minutes he fainted away. Such a scene cannot, as Nicholas said, be described ; for as he caught his young master in his arms, he could not help exclaiming—‘ No wonder he faints, he saw his good father looking in at the door, and I saw him too ! ’ They started from their seats, and ran out of the house, leaving their friend to the care of his servants, who sent for physicians. Before one could arrive he was in a high phrenzy ; and in less than three days after, he departed this life, without appearing to have an interval of reason from the moment of his seizure. Now, Sir, what think you of all this ? ”

“ Exactly as I did before,” replied I, “ as respects the appearance of ghosts ; for the feelings as you describe of this good old servant, had placed his master before his imagination the whole of the day, and he owns at last he was not sure he really saw him.”

“ Aye, Sir, but the effect produced on the young gentleman ; don’t you think he must have seen him ? ”

“ The sudden seizure of a brain fever, no doubt,”

said I, "doubly awful under these circumstances, and possibly intended to exhibit the displeasure of God against such a profligate character in the eyes of his companions. Sudden death, or the destruction of reason, is often the consequences of immoderate drinking. Alexander the Great, as he is called, because he was a *great conqueror*, died by a fit of intemperance after a feast, as sudden as this unhappy young heir."

"Well, Sir," returned Humphrey, "it might be so, I won't set up my opinion against wiser ones; and I remember Nicholas said, he had heard that hard drinking had affected his young master's brain before; so that warning had been given him, as it is to most sinners, if they would but attend. But if you'll please to hear, I will give you a further reason for supposing this house has been haunted."

Receiving permission Mr. Peach proceeded.—
 "The old lady, his mother, and her daughters returned to the mansion. The young ladies married away, so that the old lady was left alone with her servants, and sometimes a young lady, a cousin I believe, from whom I heard the remainder of this ghost story. As the old lady only wished for female servants to reside with her, she gave Nicholas Ridman a cottage and bit of ground, where he

enjoyed himself, till both himself and his mistress were grown much in years. At her request he visited her most evenings when she had no company, for as he was a truly religious man, she liked his conversation, and he had enjoyed the advantage of a good education, and never kept low company, so there was nothing vulgar in his talk.

When Nicholas was taken ill, as it proved never to recover, the old lady took on sadly. She looked out of her window, in sight of his dwelling, every hour to see if he was well enough to leave his cottage; and I verily believe would have tended him herself if she had not been confined to her house by the loss of the use of her limbs. The seventh night after he was taken, as she and the young lady were at supper, with a servant waiting, a lamp burning in the great hall, the door of the room being left open as the weather was warm, the old lady looked towards it suddenly, just as her son had done before, but not losing her senses, she said,— ‘What’s that?’ Her friend and the servant saw nothing, and asked her what she saw? She made no reply, but went on with her supper, till casting her eyes again at the door, she repeated her question. This she did three times with increasing earnestness; but would make no reply to the request made her for information as to what she saw. In a few minutes she desired to be attended to bed, after which, the servants and the visitor searched the

house to find out what it might be which had alarmed the old lady, but found nothing. The next morning word was sent that Nicholas was dead; and on communicating the intelligence to his mistress, she replied, "I know that, he looked in at the door last night. Now, Sir, (concluded Humphrey) what think you of this?" "Truly," replied I, "from observation I am obliged to think, there are very few servants now-a-days who deserve so well of their master and mistress, as your old acquaintance, Nicholas Rignan. Your story reflects great honour upon his character and that of his superiors, who knew how to value and reward his humble worth: but as he only chose to appear to his affectionate, and as I should judge, supererogated mistress, and that too, just at the time, when her thoughts were so intent upon him and his situation; I must withhold my credence to his having appeared at all. — "You are hard of belief, Sir," said Humphrey, who still seemed disposed to favour the report, though he acknowledged we should be cautious how we spread such abroad, as in some cases it might injure our neighbour's property. We then conversed on the sin of scandal, so little attended to by multitudes. He told me, this was another temptation, with which he had been assailed; for his line of business led him to know much of the private affairs of his neighbours: and

he found that altho' it was generally thought none but old ladies loved to hear scandalous news, he found gentlemen of all ages were just as fond of it,—and that he could not please many of his best customers, or insure their custom more effectually, than by carrying such sort of news to their ears. “For some time,” continued Mr. Peach, “I was little aware of the sin I had fallen into; but I believe it seldom happens, that a sincere Christian is permitted to lay under a delusion for any great length of time. The word of God is described as being sharper than a two-edged sword, a discernor of the very thoughts and intents of the heart; therefore it cannot be expected, that those who are constantly using it, should escape being wounded by it if they deserve chastisement. Thus it happened, that as I was reading, as it came in its order, the 15th Psalm, conviction flashed on my mind, that I lacked one of the marks of those who shall abide in the Lord's tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill; seeing that amongst other things it was required, that he should not backbite with his tongue, doing thus evil to his neighbour; neither take up a reproach against his neighbour. This set me to work in search after other evidences of my being a truly converted man,—and sad misgivings I had: I was indeed for a long while in the valley of humiliation. I am no advocate for poring over our sins and infirmities, for I well know, ‘The joy of the Lord is our strength;’ and in proportion as we can rest on

his covenant-love, ordered in all things and sure, and feel our interest in the righteousness he has wrought out for us, will be our advancement in holiness of heart and life, without which no man shall see the Lord : yet there are seasons, when we ought to look *in*, as well as *out* of ourselves."

"I understand the distinction you make," returned I, "and am persuaded, there is no duty more necessary than self-examination ; but as we are insufficient in ourselves for this, as well as every other good work, the aid of the great searcher of hearts must be implored, after the example of David, who said, ' Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' After this then, I presume, Mr. P. you lost your gossiping spirit ; and I hope none of your customers in consequence : but I suppose they were a little surprised at the alteration in your discourse." " When they asked me for news," replied Mr. Peach, " I frankly told them the resolution I had formed, that my study for the future should be to be quiet, and only to mind my own business. They could none of them gainsay that this was a wise resolve, and there was no reason because I left off gossiping, that I should be *glum* and silent. To a person who thinks, and makes observations on what passes around him, there will generally be some innocent, if not pro-

fitable subject for talk ; and sometimes I have good things to relate of my neighbours, which 'tis my duty to blazen abroad. How many good things could I tell you, Sir, about our Rector, who you must know is a justice of the peace ; and I suppose has fewer people brought before him, than any other justice of the peace in England, because he keeps such a sharp look out on every thing passing in the parish, and endeavours to stop the current of sin at the beginning of its flow. It was but last month he saved Ned Shallow, the fishman, a heavy fine ; and, what's much better, convinced him of the bad practice he had adopted. This was selling fish on a Sunday, for because mackerel is allowed to be sold on that day, Ned Shallow could see no reason, why he should not carry on his usual business. The adversary of our souls knows how to adopt his temptations to our dispositions. Ned is a remarkably industrious fellow, and very careful for his family. Some pious persons, jealous as they ought to be for the honour of their God in the observation of his Sabbath, resolved to bring him before the justice. Now our kind-hearted minister felt for the inconvenience the fine would occasion to the poor wife and children ; so notwithstanding Shallow had heeded none of his former admonitions and explanations respecting the law, allowing of the sale of one sort of fish, in case a great flow of them came in on a Saturday, because it was of a very perishable nature ; but that it

was never intended for covetous people to set them by and keep up their price, in order to dispose of them on the Sabbath, much less to add fish of other kinds to them. Notwithstanding, I say he had heeded none of this, his kind minister called on him once more, to try what effect worldly motives might have. He recommended him before it was too late, to submit to the wishes of those, who would rather be his friends than enemies; if they saw him give up his Sunday dealings, and attend his church; and that if he did not, most likely the neighbourhood would encourage others in his business on the week days. This sort of reasoning had the desired effect. Shallow has left off screaming his mackerel in the ears of his best week-day customers, while assembled at the meeting: for he never suffered his voice to be heard by any of Mr. Goodall's congregation, because he said, he should think it wrong to disturb people at church; where he says, he intends as he shall now have time, to go himself. If he tarries long under the hearing of faithful preaching, most likely a blessing will be vouchsafed him; and then he will account the hallowing of the Sabbath-day one of his dearest privileges, as well as first duties."

"Blessed is the minister who thus labours amongst his people in private, as well as public, dispensing the word of truth; and happy the people who are in such a case!" exclaimed I. "In

general, I remark an air of cheerfulness in the countenances of those I meet at church, but that is an exception," pointing to an elderly man working in a little garden, in front of a very respectable looking cottage we were in sight of. "I don't wish, Mr. Peach, to encourage you in the renewal of your gossiping spirit; but I should much like to be informed, how it happens that an apparently religious person should wear so melancholy an aspect."

"Ah, poor man," replied Humphrey, "I pity his condition, which he will be willing enough to tell you, if you introduce yourself to his acquaintance: only stop a moment at his garden gate, and he'll ask you to walk in." "But won't he deem me impertinent," said I. "People in our rank in life," returned Humphrey, "always love to talk of ourselves and our own affairs, especially if we have any evils to complain of." "I fear the last propensity is too often found among my own," replied I; "but I will wait at the gate of this melancholy stranger, and hope to obtain his confidence."

CHAP. XVIII.

The Retired Publican.

As Humphrey Peach supposed, I had not stood many moments at the garden-gate, before the master invited me in to take a nearer survey. I could without flattery compliment him on the general neatness and taste of all I saw. This urged him to wish for my seeing more, and I was requested to follow him into his well-furnished cottage, and take a little refreshment if agreeable. As I seldom refuse a kindness offered with such seeming sincerity, I accepted it on the present occasion, especially as I thought it would afford me a better opportunity for the gratification of my curiosity. As the master re-entered, bearing in his hand his loaf of bread and plate of cheese, he heaved a sigh as he said, "My servant is out on an errand, and I am a widower, so I fetch and carry for myself." In order to dissipate his gloom, I ventured on a little raillery on the construction which might be

placed on the latter part of his observation ; but seeing in a moment it did not meet his humour, I turned my style into condolence on so heavy an affliction, as the loss of an affectionate wife. "This affliction," replied he, " comes immediately from the hand of God, therefore it sits lighter upon me, than those the hand of man has inflicted."

" Yet," returned I, " this is a nice distinction, for all our trials are permitted by Divine Providence, and man is an instrument appointed to work its will. Where our afflictions are the effects of our *own* misconduct the case is different, being aggravated by self-condemnation."

" That is my case," replied the man of sorrow, " and therefore I shall go mourning to my grave."

"I am a little surprised," resumed I, " to hear you speak so despondently, considering as I do from observing your constant attendance at church, that you have religious views : and in general they dissipate our griefs."

" Sir," replied he, " I have heard such a great character of you from good Mr. Peach, that, if you have no objection, I will tell you the causes of my sorrow, that I may have your prayers :"—"and my sympathy added I." " My father," said he, " was a gardener, and respected by all who knew

him : I was his only child, and he brought me up to the same business. I lived under his roof till I was twenty-five years of age, and was very sober-minded, though not impressed with the serious instructions I was always hearing from both my parents, as well as the minister I heard preach every Sunday. But though my heart was not affected, my head was informed, and I was pretty well convinced in my mind of the truth of religion, and purposed like Felix to attend to it at the convenient season. When I was about twenty-five years of age, I married a servant at one of the gentlemen's houses where I worked, and she being respected by the family, they offered to serve me in setting me up in business. There happened to be a public-house to be disposed of just at that time, and both my wife and I thought it a most desirable business, and ventured to disclose our wishes to the gentleman to be set up in it. Well, our wishes were granted, though much against my father's mind, who did not like the calling, not, as he said, because he thought it an unlawful one, but because it exposed people who held it to great temptations. Soon after my entering on my new business, my father died suddenly. Now, he was quite a scholar in his way, and I found a great many memorandums of sermons he had heard, and good thoughts of his own : amongst the rest, there was a paper directed to me, which he doubtless intended to give me. It was called on the outside—' Directions to James, how to conduct his public-

house, so as to give glory to God.'” The narrator opened a drawer near him and produced the paper, desiring me to read it : its contents in substance were as follows :—

“ If you wish for a blessing on your week's work, you must begin by obeying your Lord's command, to ‘ keep holy the Sabbath-day ;’ and that may be done even by a public-house keeper, though it will cost him the most forecast how to do it. Be sure to clear your house as early as possible on a Saturday night, that you may have time to settle your week's accounts, and so have your mind clear from money concerns in going to the house of God, which I pray you may never forsake ; and I wish you may have trust-worthy servants to leave in care of your house, that your wife and you may go there together ; but if not, you must go by turns. Never open your door on the Sabbath to any of your neighbours, who only want to loiter away their precious time : no body but the traveller ought to be seen in a public-house on the Lord's day. You must, I suppose, dress a plain dinner, but never have an ordinary on the Sabbath, only on market-days. Never draw a drop of liquor more for a customer, who has had too much, for then you make yourself a partaker of his sin, and will share the punishment. When the stages draw up, be as much in sight as possible, in order to check the profane conversation which generally takes place

at that time. You will in some shape or other be called to the duty of reproving sin every day ; and if you do it in the spirit of love and meekness, and in a prudent manner, you may safely trust that you will not lose customers worth keeping. Let there be a Bible in every room of your house, and may you have grace to look into it yourself every day, and then you will need no more particular directions from me."

" This," said I, as I returned the paper to the owner, " is good advice ; but I should suspect hardly possible to be followed, at least by those who would make money by the calling."

" If, Sir," returned he, " I had followed it, my gains might have been less ; but I should have been a happy man. Now it so happened, that neither my wife nor I liked our new calling so well as we expected, so we resolved to make as much money of it as possible, in order to retire from it, and then we purposed to think about good things. We worked late and early, and soon had such a large trade, as to be the envy of our neighbours, and the ruin of one or two in the same business. Being near a populous town, we fitted up tea-drinking gardens for the pleasure of Sabbath-breakers ; and in short, we did exactly the reverse of all my good father advised. In the mean while, we had two daughters born ; and we calculated on their use-

fulness, which we took care should soon be enjoyed. Before they were eight years old, they might be trusted to the tap, and sent round to carry beer to our customers. Being sharp fine looking girls, they were given enough to find them in clothes,—and as for learning, we thought that might be deferred till we retired ; which we settled should be, when the eldest should be eighteen. I recollected that I never took to learning early myself, and that about that age I had a fancy for reading, which always remained with me, as you may guess, Sir," pointing to a small book-case in the corner.

Though the possession of books does not always prove a taste for reading, I have no doubt in the present case, but that one in the humble walk of life who expressed himself so well, was indebted in some degree at least to them.

He proceeded—"When our girls began to grow up, we let them know our plans ; but how were we surprised to hear them both express their sorrow, at what we supposed would have given them pleasure. The truth was, they were grown fond of vain and low company ; and our eyes were opened too late to our folly, in expecting it to be otherwise. We saw them grow bold in their behaviour to the customers, and pert to us. How did we then repent of our covetousness in keeping them at

home, instead of sending them to school, out of the way of such temptations. I now wound up my business and took this cottage, in the hope of saving my girls from more evil. But, oh, Sir, guess if you can the anguish I endured, at finding only a few days before our intended removal here, they had both left me. I have reason to suppose they were inveigled away by some officers, who frequented our tea-drinking gardens; and an acquaintance told me, he thought he saw one of them dressed very fine at the play-house a year afterwards. I have taken every step by advertising and enquiries, to hear of them, but in vain. This happened ten years back. My poor wife pined away, and died two years after our retirement from business; and I believe I should have died too, if my mind had not been relieved by religion."

After a pause, which my sympathetic feelings could not allow me to interrupt, the sorrowful man continued. "I see my sin in my punishment, and tho' severe, 'tis not more than I deserve. To go on for twenty years acting against light, and the remonstrances of conscience in leading others into sin, oh, Sir, ought I not to go mourning all my days."

"In one sense, undoubtedly you ought," replied I; "and if you are a sincere penitent, you cannot avoid it. Thus I suppose it was with Da-

vid, for in the psalm he wrote after he knew his great sins were pardoned, he declares that *they were ever before him* ; and most likely the disciple who denied his Lord, never enjoyed the peace of mind, which his fellow disciples did. Yet methinks, you indulge rather too desponding a temper. You should look at the mercy, as well as the justice of your God. Think how he might have cut you off, and given you no season for repentance. Surely such humble and grateful thoughts as you ought to entertain, may be allowed to produce sacred joy ; and in this point of view, while ‘sorrowing you may be always rejoicing.’”

“I believe,” replied the unhappy man, “that I look more miserable than I am, for I do experience a great measure of joy and peace in believing ; and I strive to throw off my melancholy by working in my garden, reading good books, and sometimes talking with a few of my neighbours ; but something daily happens to remind me of my sins. I cannot see a poor man reeling home on an evening, (and alas, there being so many public-houses in this neighbourhood I often see that dismal sight) but I think how many I have suffered to return from my house in the same state. I cannot take up a newspaper, but I read of the fatal consequences of idleness, gambling, and Sabbath-breaking ; and when I read of the kind people, who spend their time and money in the instruction of poor children, what pangs of

self-reflection does it bring, that I should neglect my own ; hardly teaching them to read at all, and never taking them to church."

There was too much reason in these reflections made by the unhappy man, for me to attempt a contradiction ; tho' I strongly urged him to entire resignation, and the encouragement of hoping that the *consequences* of his sins might not be so fatal as he apprehended. That possibly his daughters might return to him, and he might yet escape the curse inflicted by disobedient children, in bringing his hoary head in sorrow to the grave. A gleam of sunshine seemed to arise on his countenance as I spoke ; and I took leave of him, with a promise of sometimes calling to enquire if my wishes were realized.

The apostle might well exclaim, " It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. How awful are his judgments even in this life. Diseases, elements, and wicked men are his instruments ; and when no outward means of chastisement are used, he has access to our minds. The.e, he can afflict those of his creatures endued with most sensibility, far more painfully than by bodily feeling ;—a wounded spirit who can bear ? nor can it be healed by any other hand than his, who inflicts the wound. Thus we see and feel a part of his ways, when he arises to punish sin.

And surely it should excite the greatest dread of sin, and instruct us in the only true wisdom,—to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling,—to be subject unto him lest he be angry, and we perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little."

CHAP. XIX.

The Suicide.

ON my return home I found much confusion, and some concern amongst my neighbours, occasioned by the melancholy discovery of a man hanging on a tree in a retired lane of the village. On the following day his afflicted relations appeared and proved to the satisfaction of the jury, that the rash act was the effect of insanity. The insanity itself was supposed to be produced by the severe wound his feelings had received a few months previous, by the ill usage of a pretended friend. This poor man's unhappy end, naturally led me to reflection on the instability of human friendship. It is one of the evils of life which calls forth the utmost exercise of our fortitude to sustain. How bitter does holy David lament it, and we may account it a considerable part of our Lord's mental sufferings, when he beheld all his disciples flying from him in the hour of his greatest need. To most of his martyrs

he allotted faithful friends to sympathize with, and encourage them to the end: but He drank the full cup of human sufferings; thus setting an example of patience, and submission to the will of our heavenly Father.

My dear readers, before I conclude these pages dictated by me with the warmest friendly regard for your best, your eternal interests, suffer me to lead your thoughts to the all-important purpose of securing a friend, of whom no accident can deprive you. While you conduct yourselves by the rules of honest industry, all your superiors are your friends. They are willing to assist you in times of sickness or poverty unavoidably produced. Your king and governors, while they are terrors to evil-doers, are for the praise and encouragement of those who do well. Your minister is your friend. If faithful, he watches over your better part, your immortal souls, as one who must give an account. He is willing to aid you by his counsel, to instruct you at all times; and it is a duty you owe yourselves, to avail yourselves of such an able friend, and to seek from him private as well as public admonitions. But, on these friends there is no absolute dependence. The providence of God may remove your rich neighbours to a distance; or their riches, dependant as they generally are upon a variety of fluctuating events, may take unto themselves "wings and fly away." Turbulent and rebellious

spirits may deprive you of the protection of your lawful governors; death may call away your faithful pastor, and he may be succeeded by another who cares not for the flock committed to his charge. If then you would secure a durable friendship, you can look only to him, who offers himself to your acceptance, under the endearing name of friend. Great as was the condescension of our Lord, when he said to his disciples, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," it would have afforded no hope to the convinced soul, on the first apprehension of its true state; or it would have led it to the attempt of working out a righteousness in the vain expectation of purchasing the promised friendship. But adored be the riches of his grace, he has not only declared himself the friend of his faithful followers, but the friend of sinners; inviting them to accept of pardon, justification, and holiness. "My Shepherd," exclaims David, "is the living Lord." And the Christian asserts the same; for Jesus Christ has called himself the Shepherd of his people; and He is the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The same *yesterday*, this implies his eternal existence. One of his names, as revealed to his prophet Isaiah, was "The Everlasting Father," that is, the Father of eternity. To his prophet Micah he was revealed as the "Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting." To his enemies, the unbelieving Jews, he styled himself the great *I Am*.

—the name they affixed to Jehovah alone ; and no wonder they attempted to stone⁴ him for the supposed blasphemy : and to his most beloved disciple, he said, “ Fear not, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” One of the attributes of the divine nature is immutability ; all created beings change, even the sincere Christian, though he is new created in Christ Jesus, and his spiritual life will not be taken from him, is liable to change from the influence of temptation, and the remaining corruptions of his heart ; so that he mournfully cries out with Job—
 “ O that it were with me as in time past, when thy candle shined upon my head.’ ”

Jesus Christ the same *to-day* as well as yesterday, intimates the heart-cheering truth, that he is a *present help*. How unworthy a Christian's character is unbelief ! How unworthy is worldly anxiety. His Almighty friend is with him *to-day* to allot him his daily share of temporal and spiritual good. But even the knowledge that his heavenly Friend was the same yesterday, and at present, would be insufficient for his complete satisfaction, were it not added, and *for ever*. Here is the climax or highest point of the Christian's expectation. His God and Saviour will be his *everlasting portion*. Our Lord knew the hearts of his disciples when he prayed, “ they might be with him where he was,

that they might behold his glory." He knew their love to him was so great, that nothing short of an assurance of being ever with him could complete their desires.

Is Jesus Christ indeed "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever?" and does he invite his poor, weak and guilty creatures to friendly communion with him? Then how great is the folly of those, who seek chiefly the friendship of a perishing world? The gospel is not a system of arbitrary commands, but an equitable requisition of duties, calculated to promote our best interests for time and eternity. The Christian's is the most reasonable service—what can be so reasonable as seeking the friendship of an all-wise and powerful being? What pains do men take to purchase riches, honours, and pleasures, which if procured, are in their very nature mutable. Conscience, ease and health, is frequently the sacrifice. In their nature too they are unsatisfying. Look at the rich, the honourable, and the sensual; they are restless for more riches, honours, and gratifications. But ask the believer who has sought the friendship of his Saviour, and he will tell you how easily it was procured. Without money and without price was it offered to his acceptance, and when by the same almighty grace which offered it, he was made willing to accept it, how richly did it supply the deficiency of every other good.

If from these few imperfect hints, a reader is disposed to consider the friendship of Christ worthy of his seeking, it only remains for me to point out the means by which it may be obtained. These being all of his own appointment, must be effectual to answer their purpose. First, you must discover your own character as in the sight of God. This can only be done by comparing your conduct and dispositions with his holy and perfect law. From a strict and impartial self-examination, accompanied with fervent prayer, none ever returned unaffected with deep humiliation, and a sense of spiritual wants. Having discovered the *need* of his friendship, an application for his help naturally follows; but as it would be highly absurd to apply to, or trust to the promise of an earthly benefactor, without seeking a *knowledge* of him, and an assurance of his *ability* to fulfil his engagements; so the most rational believers are those, who examine the most closely into the character, the offices, and the mission of their Lord and Saviour. They diligently "search the Scriptures, which testify of him." Here he is most emphatically found of those who seek him. They often find him in chapters where they least expected, hid as it were behind a ~~cloud~~ of Jewish rites and ordinances; till in the full blaze of the gospel history of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension, they with the apostles of old, are fully convinced they have indeed found him, of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. If

my dear reader you have proceeded thus far, you surely must next desire to be oftener in company with this heavenly friend ; for who does not desire the presence and conversation of his friend ? Who does not frequent the places where he is most likely to meet him ? Now this gracious friend does not confine himself to any place, though he absents himself as respects his *favourable* presence, from the haunts of sin or vain amusements. There let it be recollected he is present, in the character of the righteous Judge, the enemy of wicked doers. In the path of duty the Christian may rest assured his Lord stands near him as his friend ; observing all his honest and industrious pursuits, and granting his blessing, so far as may be consistent with other wise designs of his providence respecting him. *However* or *wherever* he is thus lawfully engaged, he may cheerfully trust, and look up to him for succour. He is then to be sought in the way of active duty, and private meditation ; and these two may be more closely united than is generally imagined. It is true, there are many occupations in which they are incompatible. The tradesman in his shop ; and the mechanic at his work, must necessarily direct the full force of their thinking powers to their business, and rest satisfied with the Sabbath hours for devout meditation : but those engaged in country avocations, are in this respect highly favoured. The pious husbandman finds his plough, his reaping hook, his scythe, and

his thrashing flail, no impediments to serious thought : And from frequent meditation on divine subjects, the greatest pleasure and profit may be derived. In this manner the affections are directed to heavenly objects. Merely to think of heaven as our home, and Jesus as our friend who has purchased the inheritance, is not sufficient for the purpose of weaning us from the world, and exciting the gratitude due ; we must picture to our imaginations the glory of the state, and the various means by which we are introduced to it, if we would comply with the apostle's injunction,—“ Set your affections on things above.” And who can meditate upon the interesting theme of a Saviour's love, without experiencing *some* return ? Who can consider him as leaving the heavenly abodes of bliss, to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—follow him in his works of grace and mercy—dwell on the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and know that he did all for us men, and for our salvation, without exclaiming—“ What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits ?” To hearts thus exercised in the work of meditation, the public services of religion doubly profitable.

With what delight do they attend to their minister while he enlarges upon the subjects they have before considered ; and throws new light, from sources of information his superior learning

has furnished him with. Christians look more especially for the presence of their Lord in his *public ordinances*, because he has declared that wherever two or three are gathered together, he is in the midst of them, and that he loves the gates of Zion, even better than the tents of Jacob; and above all, they expect the manifestations of his friendship, when they meet around his table. The reluctance which numbers of professing Christians shew to an attendance on this ordinance, is not less surprising than it is lamentable. Surely the injunctions of a dying friend in every other case would be considered most sacredly binding. Act not then a part by your heavenly friend, which your feelings could not allow you to do by an earthly one, but accept the invitation addressed by him to every sincere penitent, and reap the attendant blessing; for assuredly at those seasons, he will manifest himself unto you as he does not unto the world.

Finally, let those who have sought after and happily found this faithful, unchangeable friend, recommend him to others, as knowing his riches unsearchable, his heart capacious enough to admit the whole human race, and his willingness to "Save even to the uttermost all who come unto God through him."

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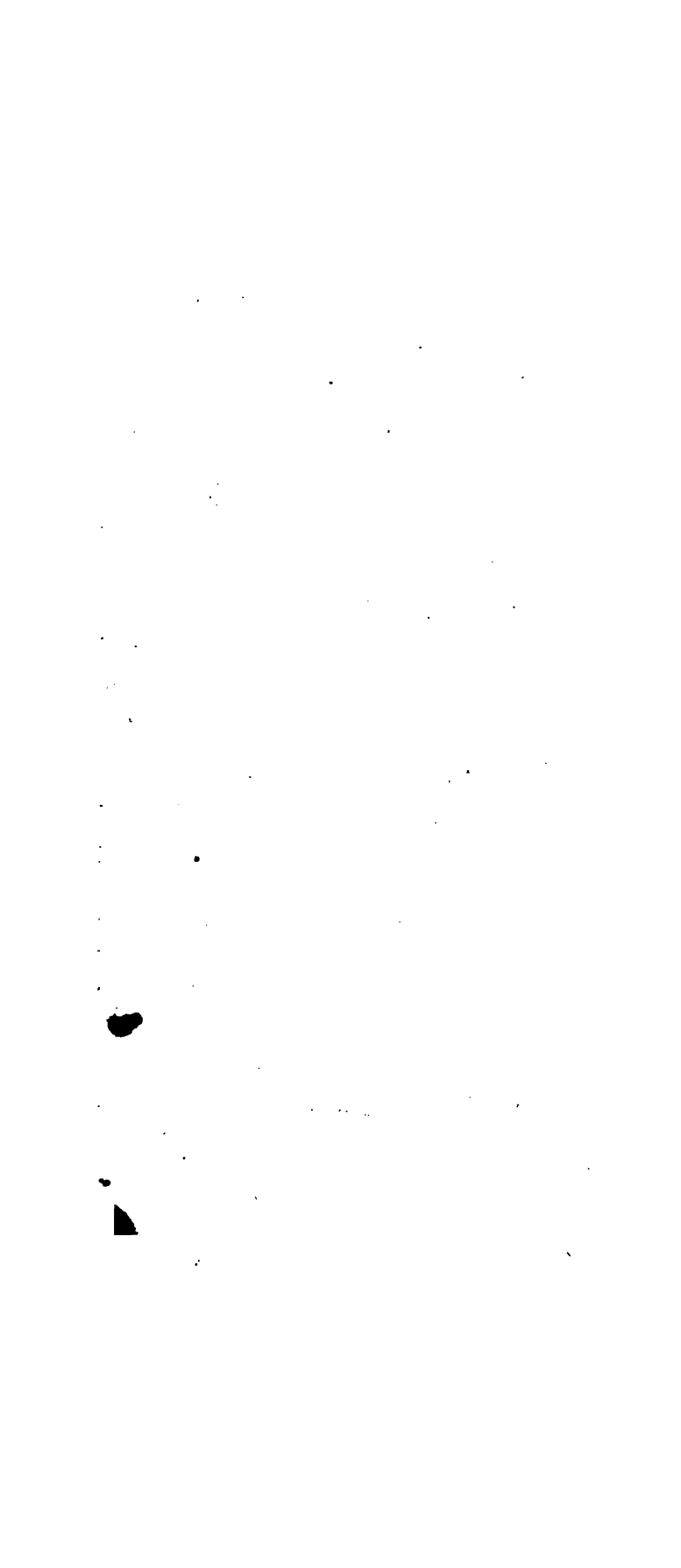
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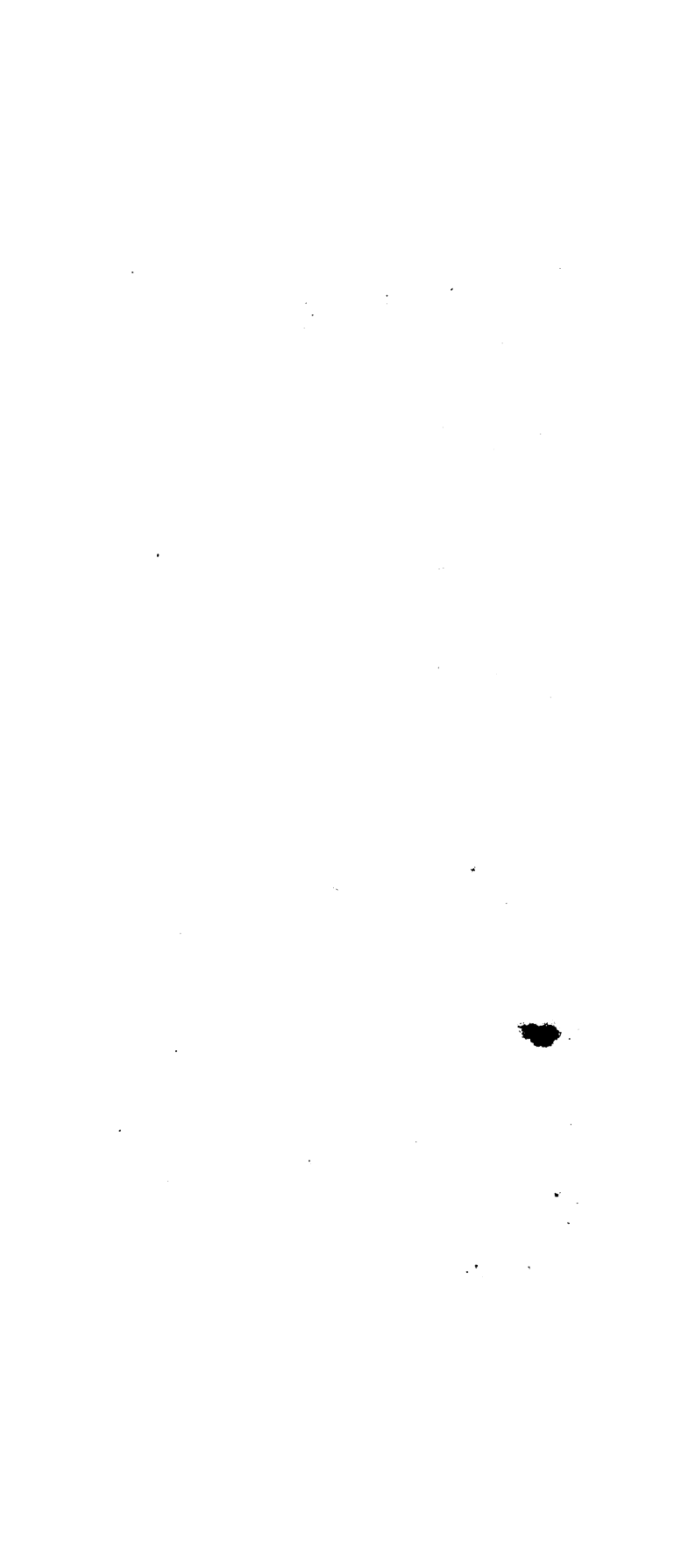
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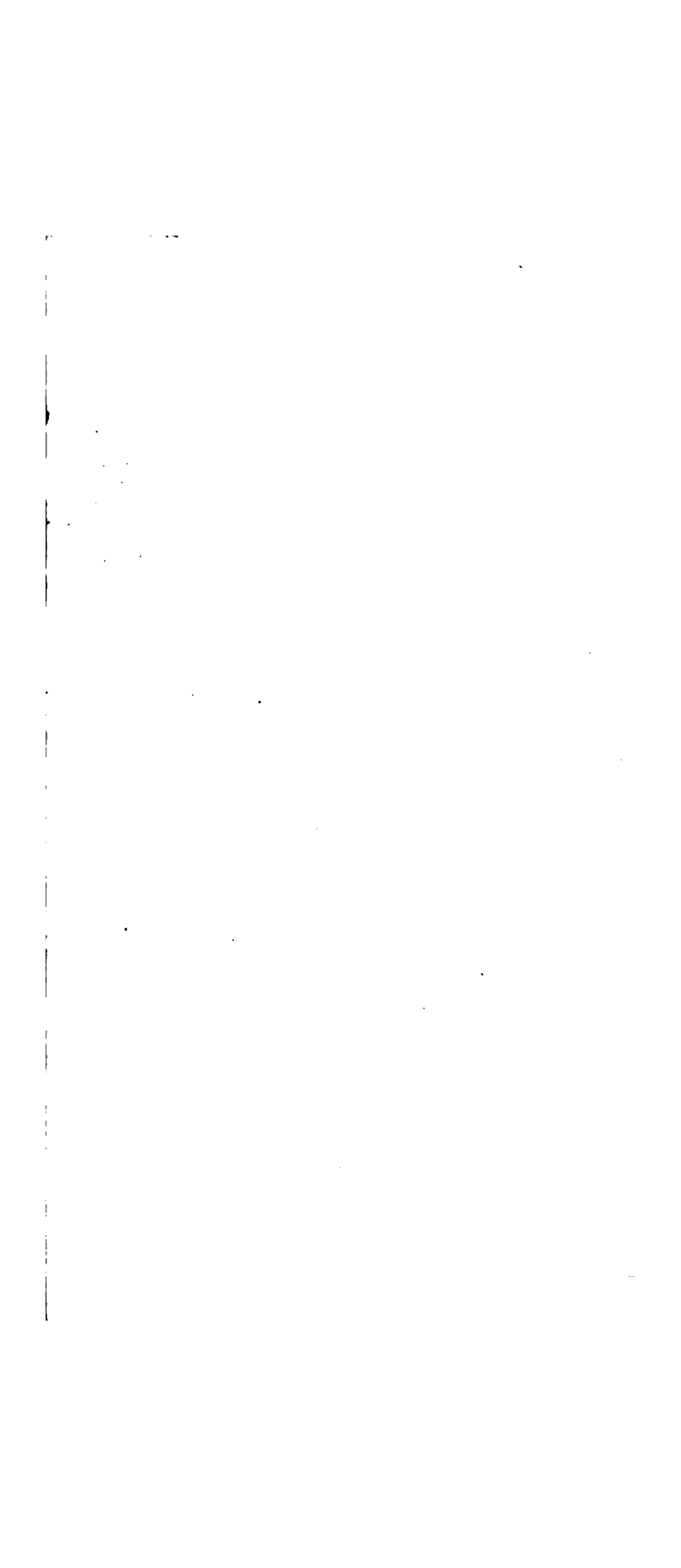
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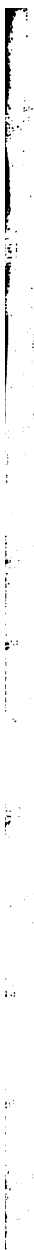




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